

# *Luke's Gospel*

*Chapters 22:1 – 24:53*



*Volume 6*

**About the cover.**

I am very grateful to my dear friend Christine “Chris” Eaves, who has given her time and skill to producing the covers for the 6 Volumes of Luke’s Gospel. The covers show the gradual revelation of Jesus, as you progress from a closed door, to an open door, revealing the Saviour. The covers are a sermon in their own right.

**About the artist.**

Chris has always been interested in photography. For many years, she sold artwork in local galleries and used photography just as a reference. Gradually though, and with the introduction of digital cameras, the photography became more important than painting.

Chris lives in Weymouth on the South Coast of the UK and works right opposite Weymouth Beach, which presents many opportunities for photography and the light is constantly changing. A few years ago she won a national photography magazine competition and the prize was a Canon 450D.

In Autumn, 2011, Chris was one of the 12 finalists (out of 55,000 entries) in the BBC TV's Countryfile Calendar Competition. “This has given me great spur to push on in this fantastic world of photography. This is a wonderful world and there is so much that I'd love to do, and yet, it seems that time here is so short. I try not to waste a moment!”

A devout Christian, Chris uses her talent to provide devotionals from nature, calendars, linking Scriptures with pictures, to inspire other Christians to look with a discerning eye on the Creator of the Universe, Jesus Christ.

Please visit Chris’s website when you have a moment.  
<https://www.chriseavesphotography.co.uk/>

## Dedication

This 6 Volume series comprise the ministries given between **October 2021** and **March 2024**.

To those who sat through these ministries, I thank you for your encouragement to me and I hope you too have been encouraged.

Thanks to my amanuensis Shelley for her continual encouragement to get this book published and her gracious correction, suggestions and support to me.

My gratitude goes also to my wife Diana who has encouraged my recovery and been a source of strength, inspiration and love. She has always been there for me, physically and spiritually, on my path back from a stroke.

Love in Jesus,

**Mike 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

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### **Where a Bible version is not stated it is the Authorised Version, otherwise:**

- CEV Contemporary English Version
- Darby John Nelson Darby Translation
- ERV Easy to Read Version
- Geneva 1587 Version
- GNB Good News Translation
- GW God's Word
- ISV International Standard Version
- KJV Kings James Version
- LEB Lexham English Version
- LITV Literal Translation of the Holy Bible
- LXX Septuagint
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- YLT Young's Literal Translation

Scripture quotations are in ***italic script***. All versions can be found in e-Sword. e-Sword is a fast, effective and free way to study the Bible. e-Sword is feature rich and user friendly with more capabilities than you would expect in a free Bible study app. Blessings upon Rick Meyers for e-Sword <http://www.e-sword.net/> Please send him a co

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## 189. The Plotters *Luke 22: 1 - 2*

*Luk 22:1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. Luk 22:2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.*

We now come to the final chapters in Jesus life. These comprise the feast of the unleavened bread or Passover and the judicial execution of Jesus. The question on the minds of the religious leaders was how to kill JESUS. There was however an obstacle in the way, namely the people, and they had to be careful not to offend them. The religious leaders are in a quandary.

Why did they want to kill Jesus? He did not hurt anybody, He went around doing good, *Act 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Act 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) Act 10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; Act 10:38 **How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.** Act 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:*

The reason that Jesus was hated by the priests and the others was because they were **uncircumcised in heart**, and that this caused them to resist the Spirit of God, *Act 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and **uncircumcised in heart and ears**, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Act 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Act 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. Act 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.* They were so annoyed that they snarled and gnashed there teeth.

They were not “born from above”, God-fearing, faithful, circumcised in heart, converted, dead to self, a new creature, redeemed, righteous, and so on, they just had not gained a foothold in the kingdom. They were practicing a form of Judaism but not the law of Moses. They were as it is said in the OT, *Isa 29:12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and **their fear toward me is taught by the precept of***



**men:** *Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: **for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.***

It shows us that good teaching, without the goodness of God accompanying it in the soul of man, will lead to a conflict. And we have to go right back to the beginning to see it at work, and it works all through history. Cain killed Abel because he did the works of the devil, *1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1Jn 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? **Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** 1Jn 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

But surely I am not accusing the priests of Jesus day of being evil, of doing the works of satan? Yes I am. And it must be a fact that in so many places of worship, where the ministers hide behind the mask of Christ, they do so for convenience, not believing what Christ taught, but are pushing their agenda, in His Name, *Luk 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: **for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;** and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.* These false Christ's will succeed in seducing many, *Mar 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, **if it were possible, even the elect.*** They talk through the mask of Christ.

Religion is divided into two parts, the believing religion and the unbelieving religion. There are people who are religious and who do not believe the Christ of the Bible. They don't take His words or His person at face value, they always have to add a caveat to His word, which He did not speak, or explain it with some other philosophy, and why it cannot be literally true. They tear the words of Jesus apart, and make themselves big, and by this means make Him small. They deceive if it were possible, God's chosen people.

I accuse the priests of Jesus day, and their successors in this day and age of a blatant betrayal of Him. All of the men that say that they are called to the ministry in "the church of England", the "Baptist church", the "Presbyterian church", the "Pentecostal church", the "church of Scotland" and so on are all liars, and were never called by Christ to join these factions. They will tell you they are but Jesus contradicts them. Jesus never called them to perpetuate a ministry which He never set up. These churches do not exist in the Bible, and only churches in the Bible are defined by geographic location. Just take a look at the seven churches, all defined by a geographic location in Turkey. They are not called the Church of Turkey, they are the churches IN Turkey.

Those men in Jesus day imagined a church in their image, then they built it, then they staffed it and the excluded everyone who didn't follow them. Ask the people who perpetuate these organisations to show you how God called them to go there. They cannot, and they lie to themselves that they have heard the voice of God, a "call", but they listen only to themselves.

A Methodist website says, "Someone who is called to "the ministry" senses (sic! Is this a séance) that God wishes for him or her to devote their life to serving in the local church or ministry fulltime". The Baptists say, "God, however, calls certain persons to serve the church as pastors and in other places of ministry. Again, Paul writes to Timothy that if a man aspires to be a pastor (sic!), "it is a fine work he aspires to do"". Lloyd Jones says, "there must be an inner compulsion within the one called to preach the Word. He stated there must be "a consciousness within one's own spirit, an awareness of a kind of pressure being brought to bear upon one's spirit." He identified this as an irresistible impulse, as "some disturbance in the realm of the spirit" that "your mind is directed to the whole question of preaching." This inner coercion becomes "the most dominant force in their lives." Lloyd-Jones explained, "This is something that happens to you, and God acting upon you by His Spirit, it is something you become aware of rather than what you do." In other words, the drive to preach becomes a burden upon the heart that must be fulfilled. It is a holy preoccupation within the soul that causes the one called to step out in faith and embrace the work."

They all babble on about a calling to minister or serve the church in one way or another but they all leave this most important part out which singles a man out for the ministry, *1Ti 3:1 The word is faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, he desires a good work. 1Ti 3:2 The overseer then must be irreproachable, husband of one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, hospitable, apt to teach; 1Ti 3:3 not given to excesses from wine, not a striker, but mild, not addicted to contention, not fond of money, 1Ti 3:4 conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 1Ti 3:5 (but if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?) 1Ti 3:6 not a novice, that he may not, being inflated, fall into the fault of the devil. 1Ti 3:7 But it is necessary that he should have also a good testimony from those without, that he may fall not into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

The proving ground is the family, the proof of his calling is that he is irreproachable, the proof of his ability is his aptitude and moral rectitude, the proof of his character are the qualities of a righteousness, the proof that he is mature and not a neophyte, new shoot, the proof of the man is the testimony of people outside of the church. Where does this appear in the job description of the man called to serve God? It



doesn't, only the call to be a public speaker and the rest can go by the board as irrelevant. And if a person desires to serve Christ in the way that He appointed, would any such person go to an establishment church, or would he seek the fellowship of believers and that would constitute the church.

I went to a Baptist church 50 years ago, when I had just come to Christ. They gave me a church handbook, that I recently discovered again, and I began to question what they taught, because I couldn't 50 years ago, because I knew very little of the Scripture. There is much in that booklet which is questionable now, but one point that I mention is the Article of faith which said that they believed the scripture was the sole arbiter of truth and practice, which I do sincerely believe. So when I came to see at that time that certain church practices did not agree with the teaching of sola scriptura, I went and saw the "pastor" and asked him if he was going to do anything about it. His answer surprised me. He said although I was 99% right he was not going to change anything. This is what people in the ministry do not like, and they are just like the priests of Jesus day.

They are in their constructed bubble, without reference to the Scripture, without Godly authority, playing the religious role that suits them, claiming to serve the true God, then along comes Jesus, and with His finger, pricks the bubble, and the hot air rushes out, and there is little left of the house that man built. That is what the priests of Jesus' day did not like and it is still not liked today.

So in this imaginary "church of God", where men were contradicted, they set out to discredit Jesus, accuse Him falsely of blasphemy, persuade others to come to their aid, and recruit a traitor to betray the Lord. *Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; Joh 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Joh 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

They succeeded in getting the leaders together to attempt to destroy Christ, *Act 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? Act 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod,*

*and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

Menno Simons (1492—1561) was an Anabaptist, or I should say, became an Anabaptist after he found Christ. He suffered persecution for disagreeing with men. He is one of the many examples I could give you of the blind rage that occurs in men's hearts for the sake of religion, when Christ did no such thing but loved men. He says,

He who, purchased me with the blood of his love, and called me, who am unworthy, to his service, knows me, and knows that I seek not wealth, nor possessions, nor luxury, nor ease, but only the praise of the Lord, my salvation, and the salvation of many souls. For this I, my poor, feeble wife and children have for eighteen years endured extreme anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery and persecution, and at the peril of my life, have been compelled everywhere to live in fear and seclusion; indeed, when ministers repose on easy beds and downy pillows, we generally have to hide ourselves in secluded corners; when they at weddings and feasts, pipe and beat the tambour, and boast loudly, we must look out, when the dogs bark, lest the captors be at hand. While they are saluted as doctors, lords and teachers by every one, we have to hear that we are anabaptists, hedge preachers, deceivers and heretics, and must be saluted in the name of the devil. In short, while they are gloriously rewarded for their services with large incomes and easy times, our recompense and portion must be fire, sword and death.

But then, Our Lord promised this fate, *Php 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. Php 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Php 1:30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

We have to have the consolation, that God's word will be proven true and that justice will prevail, but we have to keep at it, *Heb 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. God sees ALL.*

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## 190. Judas Luke 22: 3 - 6

*Luk 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. Luk 22:4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. Luk 22:5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. Luk 22:6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.*

Judas was one of Jesus' friends, but he broke that bond of trust which is essential to friendship. I thought that an alternative title would have been "broken friendships", and this happens in life for various reasons, like, *Act 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. Act 15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. Act 15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; Act 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.*

Not all friendships last forever and sometimes the Lord gets you out of your comfort zone by breaking friendships, not necessarily permanently, but to get us moving again. The case of Judas is interesting for both he and Peter "denied" the Lord, *Joh 18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. Joh 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Joh 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew. Did they do anything different to each other?*

Why did Judas become an enemy of Jesus, or at least the betrayer of Jesus? I think that Judas is a "fall guy", and that he was persuaded to betray Jesus, but more of that thought later. In the beginning he was Jesus' friend, but went rogue, *Psa 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.* The NT confirms this, *Joh 13:18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.* The Psalm is interesting because it literally says, *Psa 41:9 For even **the man of my peace**, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, lifted up his heel against me.* Brenton. The picture of Judas the traitor, was not always so.

Judas Iscariot is the only one of the apostles whom the Bible identifies by his town of origin. Some scholars have linked his surname “Iscariot,” to Queriot (or Kerieth), a town located south of Jerusalem in Judea. The other disciples, so it seems, were all from Galilee, but he was from Judea. We have no knowledge of how or when he was called, but I would suggest that he might have known Jesus a lot longer than we presume.

He somehow ends up in that elite group of disciples which were known as the Apostles, *Luk 6:13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Luk 6:14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Luk 6:15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, Luk 6:16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.*

When we read the Gospel accounts we go from one event to the next, scarcely thinking of the circumstances that brought the event into play. The Gospels seem like a number of stories that seemingly are unrelated, like a collection of cards or stickers, and they can exist on their own but collectively they make the Gospels when strung together, but how the events may be joined and what happened to bring them about is not much considered.

Take for example Jesus’ relationship with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. We suddenly find ourselves at Lazarus funeral, and Jesus says, *Joh 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, **Our friend Lazarus** sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.* Lazarus was His friend so where did He meet him and for how long had he known him. How long had He known the family, *Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. Joh 11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Joh 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, **he whom thou lovest** is sick.*

Do you remember when we did the study, “Chapter 55. Dinner with the Pharisees *Luke 7: 36 – 39*” when we speculated about that little group of friends, and we saw some relationships come out? Let’s do a refresher.

John gives an account of the anointing Jesus, and present are Lazarus, the disciples, Mary, Martha, Jesus, Judas is mentioned by name, and Simon, *Joh 12:1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where **Lazarus** was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. Joh 12:2 There they made him a supper; and **Martha** served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Joh*

12:3 Then took **Mary** a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Joh 12:4 Then saith one of **his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son**, which should betray him, Joh 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Mark recalls the event and gives us another detail, Mar 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of **Simon the leper**, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. Mar 14:4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? Mar 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. Now we know who Simon was, he was Judas father and at some time or another had been a leper.

Luke tells us more, that Simon was also a Pharisee, Luk 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. Luk 7:37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, .....Luk 7:40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

I wonder if Simon the Pharisee was the one who went to the temple to pray, and prayed to himself? I am not sure that this man loved Jesus, Luk 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Luk 7:45 **Thou gavest me no kiss:** but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Luk 7:46 **My head with oil thou didst not anoint:** but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Jesus entered the house like He had been there before, and what motivated this Pharisee to ask Jesus for a meal is not known. A Pharisee consorting with Jesus was not done openly, in the daytime, it was done at night, so as not to identify the person, Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: Joh 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. This daytime visit must have had a purpose, like the other Pharisee who invited Jesus to lunch, Luk 11:37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. Luk

*11:38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.*

The Pharisees were out to get Jesus, and one way to get Him was in the informal atmosphere of a meal, *Luk 11:53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Luk 11:54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.* Judas father, a Pharisee, had no love for Jesus, despised the good deed the woman did to Jesus, *Mar 14:8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.* His son was equally callous, showing the seed not falling far from the tree, *Joh 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Joh 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

How did Judas and his father come to know Lazarus and his sisters, and why did Lazarus want to have anything to do with Judas and Simon? I think that they were all of the same family, and Simon the leper, aka “the Pharisee”, was the father. That would make Judas the brother of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. This intrigue often happens in families, and you do not mention the elephant in the room, but it is there. We were on holiday once, and spent a quiet afternoon in the Dorset records office, looking up the family tree. We discovered a relative who was born out of wedlock. We asked an aunt about this, and she was rather embarrassed about it, and never discussed the person, who to all intents and purposes was erased from family history. Why would you want to mention your relationship to Judas after what he did? My family also hid its dark secrets.

When did Jesus first meet this family? It could be that because they were of the same tribe, Judah, and because of the close proximity of their house to Jerusalem, a friendship of convenience sprang up, and Jesus family stayed there every year for the Passover feast. Judas came there at that time of the year, for the festival and a friendship between him and Jesus sprang up. As Jesus neared the time of His ministry, He began to draw disciples to Himself and Judas could have been the first. Initially Judas went out of curiosity, not fully believing what Jesus said about Himself, but he was drawn in to that inner circle of disciples.

It is a truism that, *Mar 6:4 ..... "Prophets are honored by everyone, except the people of their hometown and their relatives and their own family."* CEV. Those familiar with Jesus were most likely to see the ordinariness of Him, and suggest that there was nothing special about Him as they became familiar with Him. When we went on a holiday to Galilee, it was very beautiful, but very ordinary, and in one

sense it loses the mystique, due to its ordinariness. Could Jesus have walked these pavements, and yet because I walk the same streets, the bubble of the supernatural bursts and becomes the general humdrum, everyday dullness, of life. Things which you could hold at a sacred distance, in your mind, are brought into the reality of life. Such is the familiarity of being a prophet where you live.

I think that because Judas was His “familiar friend”, he saw Jesus in a slightly different light. He saw the development of the person and ministry, but was not in awe of Him. To be sure, there were signs and miracles wrought by Him, but this did not impress Judas, and the devil was slowly working in Him, *Joh 6:70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Joh 6:71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

I do not believe that Judas was alone in the betrayal. I do not think that he would have gained entry to the Sanhedrin by himself. But with the help of Simon the Pharisee, he got the entry, because Simon was one of those who saw Jesus as a threat to his way of life. Simon got Judas, the insider, to become part of the plan to remove Jesus. Perhaps Judas thought the rulers would just punish Jesus but not kill Him and he was ready to play his part. He does not seem to be fully aware of what he is about to do, *Mat 26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Mat 26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.* It was when Judas ate the bread and wine, the devil entered into him, *Joh 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Joh 13:27 And **after the sop satan entered into him.** Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*

Then satan got his claws into Judas, *Luk 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. Luk 22:4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. Luk 22:5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. Luk 22:6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.*

When the deed is done, when he “finds himself” again, he was in turmoil. He is suicidal, full of remorse, repentant, *Mat 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, **repented himself**, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Mat 27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. Mat 27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*



He is truly sorry for what he has done but he has no relief, and like so many souls, are convinced by the devil to end their life because it will end their suffering. But the devil is the father of a lie, and by this he gets them into hell sooner and with no chance of true repentance. Many souls are led the way of Judas, because they betray Christ by not following Him and so perish all traitors.

## **191. Preparation of the Passover *Luke 22: 7 - 12***

*Luk 22:7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. Luk 22:8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. Luk 22:9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? Luk 22:10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. Luk 22:11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? Luk 22:12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.*

If people stopped looking at current events to interpret the history of Israel, they might learn something, for example, an internet search brings up something like this and it is obviously wrong,

Israel's independence was declared on May 14, 1948 — the day when David ben Gurion officially read the Proclamation of the Establishment of the State of Israel. The formation of Israel also meant that the British rule in the country had ended and the citizens were now free. With this, Independence Day was declared a 'state holiday' and is celebrated on the 5th of Iyar.

That obscures the history of the nation of Israel going back to the time of Moses, when God declared Israel's first independence, *Exo 12:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, Exo 12:2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Exo 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:* This event did not occur in 1948, and that 1948 event was a Zionist treaty, moved by David Ben-Gurion, the Executive Head of the World Zionist

Organization, Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. It was not an Israeli treaty.

Israel declared its independent statehood under Jehovah, 3,500 years before this event and the Exodus began from Egypt, the land of bondage, to the land that was promised them. It also began with a Passover festival, and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, *Lev 23:4 These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*

This was the first time that Israel put down permanent roots, for since the time of Abraham, the people had been nomads, *Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

The Passover commemorated the last plague of Egypt, the 10<sup>th</sup> plague, *Exo 12:29 At midnight the LORD killed the first-born son of every Egyptian family, from the son of the king to the son of every prisoner in jail. He also killed the first-born male of every animal that belonged to the Egyptians. Exo 12:30 That night the king, his officials, and everyone else in Egypt got up and started crying bitterly. In every Egyptian home, someone was dead. Exo 12:31 During the night the king sent for Moses and Aaron and told them, "Get your people out of my country and leave us alone! Go and worship the LORD, as you have asked. Exo 12:32 Take your sheep, goats, and cattle, and get out. But ask your God to be kind to me." CEV.*

Jesus was commemorating the birth of the nation of Israel, Independence Day, the death of the firstborn, the Passover, the feast of the unleavened bread and the Exodus, all at the same time. Not only were Jesus and His disciples looking back at the events in Egypt, they were looking forward, *1Co 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 1Co 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:** 1Co 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

If we take the first Exodus and Passover as a template and overlay Jesus' Passover and crucifixion, we see a remarkable similarity of events culminating in the resurrection and ascension into the heavens. You will remember what Jesus has said at the Transfiguration, *Luk 9:31 Appearing in glory, they spoke of His **exodus**, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.* LITV. This is the real Exodus, the real freedom from bondage, the freedom from sin, the deliverance from this world. This is the most momentous time in history.

The Table of the Lord, the ordinance of remembrance, or as it is called in some churches, the communion, is in fact a memorial of the New Passover, *1Co 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 1Co 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* Taking the bread and the wine is partaking in the Passover, except in this case, the "blood" of Christ is not sprinkled on the lintels and door posts with a sprig of hyssop, it is spread upon the mouth of the believer, sanctifying his words.

But we get ahead of ourselves. Firstly, the disciples had to go through the ritual of slaying the lamb or goat, *Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out **from the sheep, or from the goats**: Exo 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.* The slaughtering took place in the courtyard of the Temple at Jerusalem. The slaughter could be performed by a layman, although the rituals dealing with the blood and fat had to be carried out by a priest.

How many animals were killed at Passover? That depends on how many people went to Jerusalem. Assuming 10 people ate one lamb, 100,000 people attending the feast would have eaten 10,000 lambs. Considering a million people came out of Egypt that represents a huge flock of 100,000 animals that were killed. Where did they get them from and how did an oppressed people pay for them?

A thought occurred to me, that when the disciples asked where they should prepare the Passover, it seems that they had not done it before, *Luk 22:8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. Luk 22:9 And they said unto him, **Where wilt thou that we prepare?*** If they had done it before, they would have said, "shall we prepare it in the same place as last year?" This

suggests that they had not done it before, and if that is so, it leads us to the conclusion that Jesus ministry was shorter than the 3½ years that some people say it was. I suggest it was only about 18 months at most. I think that people conclude that it was longer because of the chronology in John's Gospel, but that is assuming that John is writing events in a linear fashion, which I do not think that he is. If we only had the other Gospels, we should have concluded that it was a much shorter ministry.

We saw that Jesus followed a pattern during this final phase of His ministry, *Luk 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.* He went from Jerusalem to Bethany, the Mount of Olives, at night and came back to Jerusalem in the day. He would have found a place to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, which was no easy task considering the numbers of people flooding in to it. How did this come about?

The "chief priests and scribes" had big apartments in that crowded city. According to Haaretz, the Jewish newspaper,

Luxuries, like a bathtub, signal that the 2000-year old house being dug up in Mt. Zion, near Caiaphas' home, belonged to a member of the ruling class. Archaeologists excavating in the heart of ancient Jerusalem have begun to uncover the neighbourhood that housed the elite 2,000 years ago – most probably the priestly ruling class. One of the houses had its own cistern, a mikveh (a Jewish ritual bathing pool), a barrel-vaulted ceiling and a chamber with three bread ovens. Inside a room found with its ceiling intact was a bathtub – an extremely rare luxury that commoners of the time could not afford. Bathtubs, as opposed to ritual dipping pools, have so far only been found at King Herod's palaces in Masada and Jericho, and in the so-called "Priestly Mansion" in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Who owned the mysterious "upper room" that Jesus seemed to know about? Who was wealthy enough to own such a place and would have been willing enough to have loaned it, not rented it, for a private Passover celebration? The disciples do not appear to know the owner, and are given directions, *Luk 22:10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. Luk 22:11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? Luk 22:12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.*

Is it a supernatural occurrence or a well rehearsed event, Jesus having been here before? Why should we be told everything about what He did, *Joh 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.* One tradition holds that it belonged to John Mark's mother Mary. This was the house where the disciples met after the resurrection, *Act 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. Act 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. Act 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

This was the same house where they were praying for Peter after his arrest, *Act 12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to **the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark;** where many were gathered together praying.*

John Mark's surname is actually Marcus, I Peter 5:13, a Roman name, so presumably his father was a Roman. There may have been implications in that, since Mary is an Hebrew name and there is a question of why Mary, presumably a Jewess, would marry a Roman and not a Jew. The name of John Mark's father is not recorded in scripture, only his mother. Who was his father, was it the Roman Centurion whose servant Jesus healed in Capernaum? It seems to me that the people mentioned by name in the Gospels all have a connection through the Gospel and by this are woven together in the story. Other contenders for the ownership of the Upper Room are Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathea.

Why should we always look for a supernatural explanation to an event because we cannot see how God does it in the ordinary? We expect to live by miracles to supplement our laziness, and this is most often seen in those people who put little effort into their faith. I read with dismay the introduction of a teacher in a bible magazine that he did not read his Bible every day but he loved Jesus. Wow! A man who can hold his breath for days. But if scripture is God breathed, *2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2Ti 3:17 so that the man of God may be perfected, being fully furnished for every good work.* You must take in the breath of God to live.

If you are hoping to learn by osmosis, by attending to lots of sermons, by studying according to a programme, then you are just developing a knowledge based

Christianity. Studying the bible for yourself, not because somebody has given you a system, will reward you beyond measure, *2Ti 2:15 Give diligence to present yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.* After all you do not get someone else to eat your food and digest it, you do it for yourself.

## 192. Eating of the Passover *Luke 22: 13 - 16*

*Luk 22:13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. Luk 22:14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. Luk 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: Luk 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

In view of the fact that it was large upper room, literally a “mega” upper room, it seems that it was very large, that is, if it only had to accommodate the twelve, *Luk 22:12 And he shall shew you **a large upper room** furnished: there make ready.* But were there such a small number of attendees? Jacopo Tintoretto, between 1592-1594, illustrated the Last Supper in a big room with other people and servants.



The upper room in Acts chapter 1, could hold 120 people, *Act 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. Act 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. Act 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Act 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an **hundred and twenty**,)*

Why do we turn this festival of deliverance into a morbid little meal with a few disciples sombrely remembering when they came out Egypt, I do not know? The people in Jerusalem would have been anticipating their deliverance or at least celebrating it, the community of Israel were going to be given their freedom, and this was something to be joyful over. It would have had a poignancy for the Jews under the Roman rule and it would have been an official opportunity to say to the oppressor, "Remember this, how God defeated the Egyptians, in your face". It was a celebration, a time to involve the younger generation in their heritage, *Exo 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:*

It was celebrated by the host of Jews who came to eat the Passover, so I do not see Jesus and the disciples doing it in isolation as there would be tens of thousands doing the same thing in Jerusalem. Jesus was but one group having the feast, perhaps celebrating it with all the disciples, maybe 120 of them and some children. I would have felt disenfranchised, if I as a disciple, had not been invited to this feast, especially if it was all right for me to come to the upper room afterwards. I want to emphasise that this was a big festival, a joyous occasion and that Jesus was not alone in celebrating it. It was a noisy happy time in Jerusalem.

A few years ago, we were in Jerusalem about a month after Passover, during the celebration of Lag B'aomer. The word "Lag" is made of the Hebrew letters *lamed* (ל) and *gimel* (ג), which together have the numerical value of 33. "BaOmer" means "of the Omer." The Omer is the counting period that begins on the second day of Passover and culminates with the holiday of Shavuot, following day 49, hence Lag BaOmer is the 33rd day of the Omer count.



The Talmud relates that in the weeks between the Jewish holidays of Passover and Shavuot, a plague raged among the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva (teacher of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai), “because they did not act respectfully towards each other.” These weeks are therefore observed as a period of mourning, with various joyous activities proscribed by law and custom. On Lag BaOmer the deaths ceased. Thus, Lag BaOmer also carries the theme of loving and respecting one’s fellow (ahavat Yisrael). It is a sort of bonfire night, although it is not a biblical festival. But the point that I wanted to make is that this was celebrated by the Jews with much joy and singing. We were just going to sleep in our hotel when we heard the most wonderful voices singing with so much happiness. I imagine that the Passover was held in the same atmosphere.

With the Passover readied, the seder table prepared, and the disciples settled in their places, Our Lord commences, *Luk 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: Luk 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

This was also known as the Lord’s Supper, and it moved into buildings called “churches” or “steeple houses”, being taken away from ordinary Christians and presided over by a group of men called the “clergy”, a group of religious officials (as priests, ministers, or rabbis) specially prepared and authorized to conduct religious services. Who authorised them to do this, to take this feast away from us and give it to a “clergy” because it was not Our Lord Jesus? There is no named person who presides over “the Table”, anyone can take it, but the controlling element of man shows that error creeps in to the simple things of Christ.

The original feast of the Passover became for those disciples, a simple meal of remembrance, “as often as you like”, and we see this in the Corinthian record given by Paul, *1Co 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 1Co 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 1Co 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

The apostle, in chapters 10 and 11 of Corinthians, dealt with propriety among the believers. He draws for his illustration, the OT, *1Co 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud,*



*and all passed through the sea; 1Co 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; It is the crossing of the Red sea, and the first Exodus. He tells them that many those people perished, so be careful, 1Co 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. He tells the Corinthians to behave, without excess at communal meals, he tells them about the headship and recognition of it before the angels, and he finally comes to the celebration of Lord's Table.*

Paul has shown that the inequality in feasting, where some have more than others, and some drink to excess that is not compatible with the Lord's Table, and it required moderating, *1Co 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? .....1Co 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.* The Spirit does not say that you should not have a meal, but that you should conduct yourself as becomes a believer, and you must examine yourself before you eat, *1Co 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

The Lord's Table, which transfers across to the Christian assembly, is a communal meal, and it is the NT form of the OT Passover. If you want the Lord to "Pass over you", you must eat the Passover "worthily". Not that we were without sin or are we without sin, but we must eat it circumspectly. We are none of us worthy to come to Christ and that is the reason we come, because we are burdened with sin. But to eat worthily is to respect what He has done for us and not trivialise it as some of the Corinthians had done, and turned a joyous celebration into a heathen "booze up".

I notice in our Lord's words a similarity between the words for "Passover" and "suffer", *Luk 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover (πάσχα) with you before I suffer (πάσχω):* I think that this is significant.

Luke uses a play on words, the Hebrew festival name Pascha ("Passover"), which he associates with the Greek verb pascho ("to suffer"). I think that this has been overlooked in understanding what He is saying. The two words although seemingly similar, πάσχα and πάσχω, are not cognates, that is not having the same linguistic derivation as each other (as for example English father, German Vater, Latin pater ). They are distinct word from different meanings, but they sound the same, and give us a linked thought.

I think what Jesus is saying is that He has desired, yea, lusted after this moment, because in partaking of the Passover πάσχα, He is preparing for His suffering πάσχω, on the Cross as God's Lamb, the Paschal Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Now, again the disciples may not have understood exactly what He was saying until after the resurrection, but it was said in advance of that. He is transferring the OT Passover to the NT Lord's table, He is going from the Old to the New and He is doing it at the Passover meal, in a smooth transition.

I do not think that the disciples had expected this to happen, for them it was the ongoing ritual taken from time immemorial, and as they did it this year, so they would do it next year, and onwards, to the end of the world. It was a comforting thing to them, a fixture in their calendar, the stability of Jewish life, and they could not see it being changed, even if the kingdom was at hand. It was like Christmas, a time that they could consider, think of the faces of those long gone but fondly remembered, that moment of time which stands still and gives a chance to reflect upon it and then it is gone for another year.

This was a departure from that age old script, what did Jesus mean, *Luk 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* No more Passovers, no more eating and drinking, at least not until "*it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*". What was "it" that should be fulfilled in the kingdom?

It could mean that Jesus would eat the Passover in Heaven with all the redeemed, after He comes at the end of the world, at the consummation of all things. It could have a much nearer meaning, in that He celebrates the coming kingdom with His people immediately after His resurrection, *Luk 24:41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? Luk 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. Luk 24:43 And he took it, and **did eat before them.*** He did eat but was this what He meant by eating?

The Christian memorial of the Passover is an "often as you may" celebration of His death, *1Co 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 1Co 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* The Lord wants us to remember His work, and so in a sense it is not finished, "till He come".

As we observed, the invisible Kingdom is within you, and wherever Christ is the believer is, and so in one sense the Kingdom has come. The Kingdom is where Christ has His dominion, and that is not on earth at present. The ultimate reality of the Kingdom is held until the dead are raised, *Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

Be this is as it may, I think that it was lost on the disciples. There are more revelations to come and this would completely throw the disciples in their cosy lives. They would soon become conspirators against Judaism and their house of cards would come down around their ears. No wonder that they fled.

### **193. My Body and My Blood *Luke 22: 17 - 20***

*Luk 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: Luk 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Luk 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

This was the first time that this had been done by Jesus, and so they had never thought about Passover in terms of Christ, never had knowledge of the controversies which would split churches, never heard of “the real presence” of Christ in the bread and wine, never heard of “transubstantiation” that is “the conversion of the substance of the “Eucharistic elements” into the body and blood of Christ at consecration, only the appearances of bread and wine still remaining”, never been a party to any of the errors that would spring up around this simple act. It was a simple memorial of Christ, an act involving His friends, those close to Him, not a ceremony with bells and singing, and it was over before they had time to fully contemplate it.

The disciples do not appreciate the imminent death of Christ, *Luk 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be*

*accomplished. Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. Luk 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

It was to come as a shock to them, and no wonder they all deserted Him, *Mat 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. Mat 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. **Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.***

The disciples are about to do something at Passover that was forbidden by the Law of Moses and forbidden for a good reason, “*This cup is the new testament in my **blood**, which is shed for you*”. Jesus is inviting the disciples to “drink” His blood, and I wonder how they felt about that considering they had a strict regard for the OT Law, as did Peter, *Act 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, Act 10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Act 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Act 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. Act 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*

Blood globally represents life itself, as the element of divine life that functions within the human body. It takes about 60 seconds for all the blood in your body to complete its journey. It travels from your heart to your extremities and returns, there and back again. Blood moves with the rapid current of the great arterial rivers and through the smallest capillary creeks. William Harvey first noticed circulation (1628) through the heart into arteries and veins; however, he could not see how they connected since he did not have a microscope. The man who first described this was Anton van Leeuwenhoek about 46 years later (1674). Then, J. J. Lister and Thomas Hodgkin described the rouleaux formation or stacking of red blood cells through a capillary bed. All of these men mentioned above were committed Christians.

The human body produces two million blood cells deep in its bone marrow per second and pumps 1500–2000 gallons per day. Once formed, those red blood cells move into the bloodstream with white blood cells and platelets, all circulating through 60,000 miles of arteries, veins, and capillaries in the human body. Blood preserves and supports life by transporting nutrients to every cell of the body and taking away wastes. In this way the life of the flesh is in the blood, but the disciples

did not know that, indeed, the world would not know about the mechanics of blood for another 17 centuries.

The Law however was quite explicit, *Gen 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat..... Lev 17:10 And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. Lev 17:11 **For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.** Lev 17:12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.*

The first blood, the blood of Adam, appeared in a body fully made, and yet that normally required all sorts of scaffold products to get to that point, but with Adam it did not, it appeared fully functional. The first human cell divides rapidly, becoming a small cluster that implants inside the uterus. Initially it flattens out to a disc only a few cells thick that is able to get nutrients by diffusion from maternal blood circulation. However, by two weeks after fertilization the disc is becoming too thick for this, so the developing embryo urgently needs a nutrient transport system. Right on cue, blood and blood vessel formation begin at the end of the second week in *both* the embryo and developing placenta. Heart tubes (the precursor to the heart) form and start pumping within seven days. The cardiovascular system is the first organ system to become functional--an important factor, since every cell depends on blood to survive. Except in Adam the initial process did not happen.

We must have been reverse engineered, because Adam did not go through the processes of development, but he had the genetic code present for the earlier components, as if he did, and his offspring would go through the complete process from conception.

What does blood signify? The blood of "Bulls and Goats", points forward to the Blood of Christ, *Heb 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* But the most sacred blood of all, was Christ's, "**for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul**". The blood that was spilt for sin in the OT, was spilt because it symbolised the Blood of Christ, Only the blood that was Christ's could be "eaten", and only the blood of Christ was efficacious.

I say emphatically that blood was designed with one purpose in mind. It was to foreshadow the blood of the Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, and everywhere

you looked at life, you would see this red fluid, forbidden you to eat by God. Yet blood was the life of a man, but at the same time it was defiled with sin.

Sin is not represented by the colour black as some people, who do not use their Bibles state. Black is the colour representing ignorance and concealment, *Isa 29:15 Woe unto them that seek deep to **hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark**, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?* Red or scarlet is the colour of sin, *Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: **though your sins be as scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Sin is as red as the blood which runs in your veins.

Whenever we cut ourselves and the blood oozes out we are reminded of our sin. We are full of sin and yet the life also is in the blood. But what life? What can I have to look forward to, because I am reminded if I prick myself that the blood tells me I am a sinner and, *Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* This is the point where we realise that Christ can give us life because His blood is not contaminated, not impure, not stained with sin, *1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 1Co 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 1Co 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 1Co 15:22 **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.***

We need a Divine blood transfusion, a spiritual change of blood from what we were, our systems completely drained of the sinfulness that we inherited from Adam and compounded ourselves, and a complete infusion of Christ blood to make us whole, *Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Joh 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Of course the bread and wine were only symbols of this exchange of one life for another, but they serve to remind us, as often as we may do it, of the prize Christ offers us, of the everlasting life with Him. His blood is of a universal group, for anyone one can have it in their veins and live, and in partaking of the bread and wine, we are partaking of Him, and His blood flows within us and we share His body. So the catholic church is nearer to the mark than the protestant church by the reality of Christ.

Transubstantiation is a Scholastic term that attempts to explain how bread and wine can become the body and blood of the Lord without losing their exterior

appearance. While the word was first used in the 11th century by Hildebert of Lavardin, the archbishop of Tours, it was at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) that it became authoritative catholic church teaching.

They explain it thus,

The Council of Trent declared: “Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species (sic!) of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.”

In order to understand what all of this means, we need to understand the medieval concepts of accidents and substance. Accidents are the exterior, physical parts or qualities of something (like the fingers, hair and feet of a person). Substance is the eternal invisible quality of something (human being). Think of the life of a human person: Our exterior dimensions are in constant flux; we all look much different now than when we were born. What remains unchanged is who we are at our core — a distinct human being. In other words, our accidents change, but our substance remains the same.

With the Eucharist, it’s just the opposite. While the accidents of the bread and wine (taste, texture, appearance) do not change, the substance (the essential “bread-ness” and “wine-ness”) does change. It still looks, feels and tastes like bread and wine, but it has truly become Jesus. This is what the Catholic Church means by transubstantiation. At the end of the day, transubstantiation is a philosophical term used by the church to describe a miracle, the mystery of the Eucharist.

The Church teaches that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ at the consecration (**sic!**) and that Christ is present “body and blood, soul and divinity” in both items. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes: “Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone (**sic!**) makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace.” For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite.

Unfortunately this is not spelled out in the Bible and it has been just speculated by men what would happen. It has also been commandeered by certain men, who are officially given authority to dispense the bread and wine, which is not Biblical, since anyone at any time may partake in this, and therefore anyone can take the table of the Lord.

There is another word which appears in this teaching which is not in the Bible, namely “consecration” when at some mysterious unbiblical time, the bread and wine change into “the Body and Blood of Christ”. Where is consecration in the NT? It certainly was in the OT and it had the sense of making holy, *Exo 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to **consecrate** (וְקִדְּשׁ) him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.* Qadash means to make holy. But consecration is never spoken of in terms of the bread and wine, and why should it be, it is Christ’s body and blood after all, and He was by nature **HOLY**.

A further point worth mentioning is that the bread and the wine are separately mentioned in this article, but the believer is asked to take both, not the bread or body of Christ on its own. It matters not what men say or philosophise, Christ said “do this” and he had both elements in mind not just His body. If you cannot obey this simple request then you are a law to yourself and you are not worthy to be a part of Christ.

So just what do we mean when we take the bread and wine, are we partaking in the actual life and death of Christ or only symbolically partaking in it? That is the root of the issue. Can a man be made to have the life of Christ in him if he has no faith in God, if he wilfully sins? Can just “bread and wine” even if it turned into the actual body and blood of Christ give life to a man who commits sin, *1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1Co 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

It matters not what philosophy about the bread and wine you hold, you cannot cheat God, you cannot blind side Him, you cannot fool Him, and you can eat bread and drink wine all you like, and you can think that it turns into the real body of Christ or you can think that it is symbolic, but it is of no value without the riches of His Grace, *Eph 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; Eph 3:17 **That Christ***



***may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.***

## **194. A New Covenant *Luke 22: 17 - 20***

*Luk 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: Luk 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Luk 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

The controversies over the bread and wine will continue among men until the Kingdom come, but the disputes of mere men, their philosophies, do not bring a person into a saving relationship with His Lord. Men argued about whether the Sun was the centre of God's universe or whether the earth was the centre, for centuries, but this philosophising of mortals did not stop the Sun rising. That was the thing that mattered, as long as the Sun came up, you could believe what you will about the mechanism.

The same is true of the mechanism involved in the transforming power of the bread and wine. We can have our ideas about it, but what really matters is, *Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Joh 6:54 **Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*** The mechanism may never be fully understood, but like the rising Sun, you can feel its warmth and you can know that you have the life in Christ, and you can know that you are a partaker in His body and blood. I will not go into it here, but suggest that you look up how many times the phrase "ye know" is used in John's epistle, and you will see that these tests of life prove positive for a believer.

People can likewise cavil about baptism, infant baptism, adult baptism, baptism by immersion and baptism by sprinkling, but these are arguments about words. What matters is believers baptism, *1Pe 3:20 Who formerly were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. 1Pe 3:21 The like figure to which, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Webster.* Those words in the parenthesis, state that it is

the clear conscience to God, first and foremost that is necessary, and that is a spiritual work.

The blood also marked the deliverance from Egypt and was the first sign and the last sign given by Moses to Pharaoh, or first plague and last plague. The first plague, *Exo 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. Exo 4:9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.....Exo 7:16 And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. Exo 7:17 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. Exo 7:18 And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.*

The last plague, *Exo 12:7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.....Exo 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. Exo 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Exo 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

Although the blood was not eaten, it was used. It was used as a sign on the door post and lintel, the upright and the cross beam, to signal to the messenger of destruction, the Lord the destroyer, not to enter the house and kill those inside. If the household just ate the Passover, the body, and neglected to do the ordinance with the blood, to splash it on the post and lintel, then they perished. You cannot just take the body of Christ and not take the blood, *Joh 6:54 Whoso **eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood**, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* It is all or nothing, and so you are wise to follow the Lord and not listen to man.

I think this blood placed upon the post and lintel, was the origin of the Mezuzah, because the blood was not required to be put on the door every year, but the words of God were, *Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: Deu 6:5 And*

*thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: Deu 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deu 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Deu 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

As our Lord continues His speech, He says, *Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood, which is shed for you.* This is the first time that New Testament or new covenant is mentioned in Luke's gospel and it therefore is a seminal moment in Christ's ministry.

Now I have another gripe with the KJV, and that is the complete inconsistency of translation of these words, when it comes to the words "**new testament**". I think that this misleads people because it uses another term as well, "new covenant", to speak of the same subject. This may be because they had multiple translation committees when making the KJV, but look at this inconsistency, *Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is **the mediator of the new testament (διαθήκη)**, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first **testament (διαθήκη)**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance..... Heb 12:24 And to **Jesus the mediator of the new covenant (διαθήκη)**, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

Surely one group of men translated the Epistle of Hebrews, so why use **new testament** and **new covenant** when it is speaking of the same thing? It is the new covenant, διαθήκη, which is being spoken of in both phrases, and I will stick with **New Covenant** as the translation. This stands in opposition to Old Covenant or First Covenant.

But Jesus is still in the OT, the period of the Old Covenant, when He speaks of "**the new covenant in my blood**". He partakes of the Passover under the old covenant and at the same time announces the new covenant, and you will note this, that there is no comment, no astonishment, nothing said by the disciples on this whatsoever. They are being asked to participate in something that pushed aside the old or first covenant and yet they remain silent, passive. They are either shocked by it or ignorant of what is happening, but it does not stop them eating and drinking the bread and the wine.

The disciples had by this act become heretics to the religion of Judaism. They had thrown their lot in with the Galilean and thrown off the Law of Moses. They had seen the fault line in the first covenant, *Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Heb 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. Heb 8:8 **For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel** and with the house of Judah: Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:* They had by this singular act of taking bread and wine, thrown off the Old Covenant and its rituals, the types or shadows of Christ, in favour of the real thing, *Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

When the Christians began their mission, they came into direct conflict with the religious leaders, *Act 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Act 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Act 4:12 **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.***

There was to be no other way but the way of Jesus, *Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Joh 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This also happened to be the first time **in Scripture** that wine is recorded as being taken with the Passover. So often Christians swallow great chunks of Judaism as if it were the Bible, as this website “Israel revealed” states,

For generations, Israel has been using wine and bread as part of Passover ordinance celebration, ever since the Passover was “instituted” through Moses on the eve of the Exodus. Along with bitter herbs and the Passover Lamb, these “substances” constitute the essence of the order of celebration on Passover eve by Israel through generations of time. Yet, the lamb, the wine (sic!), and the bread have been part of holy ordinances way before the generation of Moses leaving Egypt.

That is not recorded and that is typical of men who use anything that fits their idea of reality. In fact you will not find any scriptures linking wine with the Passover. The Passover table has lost its simplicity and added things to it, which seems to be an innovation of that religion by the Rabbi's. Why do Christians have to build their sermons around Jewish fables? Is the Bible not sufficient? It is about as relevant as the Jewish laws on "flushing a toilet" on the Sabbath. The Lord's Supper is an institution of Christ, not a compromised Jewish festival.

Why did Jesus give thanks for the cup and the bread? Out of politeness, out of necessity, because we always give thanks at meals, often not even thinking what we are saying but we just do it anyway. I think that He did it for a reason, *Luk 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:*

I think that it was more than a passing gratitude to His Father for the elements of bread and wine. He did not have to give thanks because He and the Father were one. He was thanking God for the task that He had undertaken, thanks for the New Covenant, thanks for the people that God had given to Him, thanks even for the troubles ahead, *Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; **who for the joy that was set before him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus was among the friends He would bring to Glory, save one. He gave thanks that He would see them again, He gave thanks that after He had polished them like arrows and fitted them for service He would receive them again. He would not forget them, and in case they forgot Him, He said, *Luk 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: **this do in remembrance of me.***

The one thing that He asked us to do was to remember Him, a simple act, and so it is not in joining a queue to receive the bread and the wine from a special man who dish it out, and that is sufficient to have done what is required of us. He asked us to **remember Him** and I do not see why you cannot do this on your own if you sincerely desire to remember Him.

How you remember Him is important, more important than just receiving bread and wine, and for many who do this, week after week, they know nothing of Him, and could not tell you much about Him. So in remembering Him, we are like those old saints in Malachi's day, we should talk often about Him, *Mal 3:16 Then **they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared***

*the LORD, and that thought upon his name. Mal 3:17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

It is by remembering Him, that the Lord recognises us. When we have fellowship, sharing, it is with each other and with Him, *1Jn 1:3 What we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that **you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*** GNB. We share in the memories of Christ, His Birth to His death, what He did that makes Him so special to us. We do not need some minister barging in and taking the centre stage, for Christ is at the centre of this memorial. His people give their own testimony of their life lived with Him, and what He means to them and what He does with them.

The Lord's Table is not something presided over by men, but open to all who know Him to give some testimony of Him, some remembrance of Him "until He comes" but they do so in a worthy manner. And this means that the Scriptures which hold Him in high esteem, cannot be changed and rewritten to suit the age, for that would be a different Jesus that we "remember", *Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.* If we change what He said, what He did, and what He is, then we do not remember Him as He wanted, and the consequence is that we have a False Christ.

Are you suffering from false memory syndrome or do you remember Christ as He is?

## **195. Betrayal Luke 22: 21 - 23**

*Luk 22:21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. Luk 22:22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! Luk 22:23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.*

We all know the story of Judas Iscariot, *Luk 6:16..... and Judas Iscariot, which also was **traitor**.* The word προδότης = prodotēs means to betray or be a traitor. But I do not think that he was the only one who betrayed Jesus, *Joh 18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? **He denied it**, and said, I am not. Joh 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Joh 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

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The whole band of disciples left Him in the garden of Gethsemane, *Mar 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.* I think that leaving someone who you swore allegiance to, amounts to betrayal of trust. Traitors betray the trust of those who have faith in them or believe their promises. In this matter I think that all of the disciples were traitors, *Mat 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.* The prophecy that closest fits this is, *Zec 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*

And there you are thinking, well, I will never betray the Lord, just as Peter and the other disciples said, *Mat 26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Mat 26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Mat 26:35 Peter said unto him, **Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*** Brave words but empty words, and we are just the same no matter how much we aspire to grand thoughts.

When we break the commands of Christ, we are betraying Him, and the man who says he doesn't is a liar and a deceiver. We all have betrayed Jesus in the past and will continue to do so, so what is the point of continuing? If we have come to see the utter hopelessness of our situation, then there is a hope for us, *1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* We are forgiven through walking in the light, **following Him.**

Luke gives a very short account of Judas' betrayal, and I suppose that when he wrote his Gospel it had become a matter of History, and so it did not really need to be dwelt upon. In order to gather a little more information we will look at details from the other Gospels.

Jesus tells the disciples that one of them was the traitor who would betray Him, and they all ask Him if it was them. Even Judas asked the question, and it seems at that point in time no one knew because the devil had not entered him, *Mat 26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Mat 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and **began every one of them to say***

**unto him, Lord, is it I?** *Mat 26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. Mat 26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Mat 26:25* **Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.**

Did they all have doubts about themselves, whether they would betray Him? Were they all uncertain about their loyalty? I think so, because they all fled and that showed the weak state of mind that they had. But if they had not been broken like this, had not seen their weaknesses for what they were, I do not think that they would have come back so strong. That said, Peter still has some wobbles in his faith, *Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Gal 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Peter was still a little flaky.

Mark is a bit grimmer in his assessment of Judas, when he says it were better that this man had never been born, *Mar 14:18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. Mar 14:19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? Mar 14:20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. Mar 14:21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.*

Did Judas partake in the bread and wine or only in the Passover. I think that he did take the bread and wine according to Luke, *Luk 22:21 "But, look! The one who betrays me is here at the table with me!* The other Gospels are not clear about it. But if he did take the elements, he did so unworthily, *1Co 11:27 Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. 1Co 11:28 But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice.* GNB. People who are unworthy, people who deny Christ, and eat the bread and wine, will be judged like Judas.



John states when the devil entered Judas, *Joh 13:2 And supper being ended, **the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;** Joh 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Joh 13:22 Then the disciples **looked one on another**, doubting of whom he spake. Joh 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Joh 13:24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. Joh 13:25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Joh 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. **And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Joh 13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him.** Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Joh 13:28 **Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.** Joh 13:29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. Joh 13:30 **He then having received the sop went immediately out:** and it was night.*

Only John knew what was said by Jesus, since John was leaning against Jesus, when Peter asked the question, "*who is it?*" it was relayed to John. What is the name of the traitor? The disciples were not privy to this conversation, and some of them thought that because Judas carried the money, Jesus had asked him to get some things for the feast or to contribute something for the poor. Satan however entered with the sop and Judas went out from the meal. The act of betrayal was nearly complete.

If it was foretold in prophecy that Judas would betray Jesus, why punish Judas for an act he could not avoid doing? It was prophesied what this man would do, *Zec 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. Zec 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD..... Psa 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

Is Judas responsible or was he dragged inevitably, by the hand of God to do the deed? I could answer that it is the sovereignty of God, which we cannot dare question, and end the matter there, *Rom 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Rom 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For*

*who hath resisted his will? Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? God can do as He please in the realm of men and He does, and that is an end of it.*

But it is not all as there is something to think about in all this, for example, “Why couldn’t the Romans kill Jesus by themselves, why the elaborate betrayal?” The Lord would have died just the same wouldn’t He? Did it matter how He died as long as He died? But if this were the case, He would not have been a “sacrificial lamb” and would not have been offered by the priesthood?

Did it have to be upon a Cross or stake, couldn’t He have just been stabbed, or executed? That would not have identified Jesus with the sacrifices of the OT. That would not have made him cursed, *Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:** Gal 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* This is taken from Deuteronomy, *Deu 21:22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: Deu 21:23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

No, the death of Christ had to involve the whole community in a conspiracy to execute God’s Messiah, as David first said in Psalm 2 and the people reiterated, *Act 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? Act 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Act 4:27 **For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,** Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* There is the Sovereignty of God again

But it needed “a fuse” to set this powder keg off, it had to come from one of the people of Israel, the very people who had received God’s mercy in the wilderness and now cast it in His teeth. It came from the very heart of Jesus’ own disciples, out of the midst of His disciples, from His own tribe of Judah, namely Judas. Judas was condemned to eternal damnation with no remission for this act, but is it fair to punish a man when his fate is prophesied? Yes under the sovereign power of God it is, but there is more to this story, *Joh 6:70 Jesus told his disciples, “I chose all twelve of you, but **one of you is a demon!**” CEV.*

It does not say Judas was possessed by a demon, was oppressed by a demon but "**one of you is a demon**". This is the reason that Judas was lost with no chance of being redeemed, *Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, Heb 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* He was a devil, one of the devils brood and there was nothing that he could do about redeeming himself. He was a devil when he met Jesus, he was a devil when he was born, and he was a devil when he died.

The devil himself was the motivator for the Death of Christ and Judas was the devil's chosen weapon. Perhaps in this great cosmic battle, the battle against principalities and powers in the heavenlies, satan thought that he had brought Christ to nothing, brought Him to the final execution from which He would not rise. That would seem to be the case from the position of the disciples, no hope at all, *Luk 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. Luk 24:21* **But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:** and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. They would, all of them, be blindsided, and the outcome, for now remains to them, the disciples, in doubt.

## 196 Who is the Greatest *Luke 22: 24 - 27*

*Luk 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. Luk 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. Luk 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. Luk 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

Now I do not know whether this strife actually occurred at this occasion of the Passover or whether it occurred on another occasion, and the story was inserted here because it was relevant to what s happening. It is like the anointing of Jesus by Mary, which Luke seemingly puts earlier, to illustrate a point (Luke 7:36). The other Gospels put the anointing around the time of the Crucifixion. In Luke it is out of step with the others. "I think this is exactly the same event recorded in all the four Gospels with more or less detail. The fact that in Luke it seems to be out of sequence, that it is told far from Galilee, in Bethany, near Jerusalem, leads us to think that there is a reason for it being included here. It is inserted here, I think,

because it is an example of **Wisdom** being justified by her children and so follows this statement, *Luk 7:35 But wisdom is justified of all her children*".

They had squabbled many times over who should be the greatest and this is hardly a time for an ongoing dispute, *Mat 20:20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. Mat 20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.....Luk 9:46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.*

But here it is, so it seems, inserted at a most solemn time, and it takes the spot light off Jesus, to show that the disciples were a greedy self seeking bunch, just hoping to get the place of top dog. I think it is inserted here for just such a reason, to show that they were all after something from Jesus. Judas got his 30 pieces of silver, the disciples were after position, and by inserting this passage here, Luke brings out their attitude, which would otherwise be hidden.

John uses a similar theme to show the servant nature of the Gospel, and that we are to serve not be served, *Joh 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Joh 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; Joh 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. Joh 13:5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Joh 13:6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Joh 13:7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Joh 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. **Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.** Joh 13:9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Joh 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.....Joh 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. Joh 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* It is the same thing that is being said although in a slightly different way.

I wonder how many people latch on to Jesus in the hope of reward. The modern preachers and theologians who think they have control over Christ's kingdom may be in for a big surprise. They think that because they have a so called "calling" they are in for a greater reward, but it carries a greater condemnation, *Jas 3:1 Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater*

*judgment.* Darby. Those who desired to become teachers because of selfish motives or those who used their positions as a source of manipulation will realize they've already received their reward on earth. Such teachers will be judged more strictly and will stand empty-handed before their King.

We ordinary mortals come to Jesus like we come to a nurse, for some bitter medicine, and we know we need it but we fight so hard against it. Ungrateful at the care being shown us, grudgingly taking the elixir that will do us good, wanting to get back to what we were. We come to Him in our needs and wants and expect to be greatly rewarded for our supposed faithfulness. Having spent our days in the pleasures of our flesh, being faithful to the things of man, being honoured by men, obtaining favour with men, we somehow expect to transfer that into heaven's kingdom and be a smash hit there too. But treasure in heaven comes at a price, the price of following Jesus.

The earthly honours that man gets do not carry over into heaven, they are ephemeral, transient things of this life. Richard Feynman, the Physicist, had this to say about honours, and it is relevant to what we are saying,

One of the things that my father taught me besides physics, whether it's correct or not, was a disrespect for certain kinds of "respectable" things. For example: He used to sit me again on his knee, and he'd open up a picture: and there was a picture of the Pope with everybody bowing in front of him, and he'd say, "Now, look at these humans" he'd say, "Here's one human standing here, and all these others are bowing. Now what is the difference? This one is the Pope." He hated the Pope anyway, and he'd say "The difference is epaulettes", of course not in the case of the pope, maybe it was a general. It was always the uniform. The position.

But this man has the same human problems. He eats dinner like anybody else, he goes to the bathroom, he has the same kind of problems as everybody. So he's a human being, why are they all bowing to him? Only because of his name and his position. Because of his uniform. Not because of something he especially did.

Questioner: "Was it worth the Nobel prize?" Feynman: I don't know anything about the Nobel Prize. I don't understand what it's all about, what's worth what. And if the people in the Swedish academy decided X, Y, or Z wins a Nobel Prize then so be it. I won't have anything to do with the Nobel Prize, it's a pain in the \*\*\*. I know it like honours, I appreciate it for the work that I did, and for people who appreciate it, and I know that other physicists use my work. I don't need anything else. I don't think

there's any sense to anything else. I don't see that it makes any point when someone in the Swedish academy decides that this work is noble enough to receive a prize. I've already got the prize. The prize is the pleasure of finding the thing out, the kick in the discovery, the observation other people get to use. Those are the real things, the honours are unreal to me. I don't believe in honours. It bothers me. Honours bother me. Honours are epaulettes, honours are uniforms. My Papa brought me up this way. I can't stand it, it hurts me. When I was in high school, one of the first honours I got was to be a member of the ARISTA. Which is a group of kids who got good grades. And everybody wanted to be a member of the ARISTA. And when I got into the Arista I discovered that what they did in their meetings was to sit around to discuss "Who else was worthy to join this wonderful group that we are." Okay, so we sat around trying to kind of decide who it was who would get to be allowed in to this Arista. This kind of thing bothers me psychologically for one reason or another, I don't understand myself. And from that day to this it always bothered me. Okay, I don't like honours.

What a healthy attitude to honours. Sometimes we use earthly things as crutch, to prop us up, to support us in this life because we have no reference point for our lives in the universe. We make up these things to help give us stability, position and order, and that is precisely because we do not have Christ, we do not have any meaning at all in our universe, and that is why we invent it.

To be assured of a place in heaven, the rich young ruler had to discard the things that made him a success, all the epaulettes of trade, all worldly achievements that made him wealthy, *Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: **sell all that thou hast**, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **follow me**.* The wealth was the problem that had jammed up the wheels of his life, and only by throwing it away and following Christ, did he stand a chance of getting eternal life.

What are the things which stand in our way, inhibit our lives, which stop us from following Christ. Isn't it about time we took a good hard look at ourselves and what we do, or else we could end up as that rich young ruler. We sing "All for Jesus, all for Jesus, all our talents and our powers, all our thoughts and words and actions, all our passing days and hours," when, if we were honest, it's a good hymn but it doesn't apply in my life.

All we have and all that we possess, come from the hand of the Almighty, *1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.* Do you see what that means? It means that all of the epaulettes, all the honours that

we got in this world are taken away from us when we die, *Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

We shall be stripped of all rank, privilege and honours and we shall all stand before Him naked, kings and queens, rulers, scientist, philosophers, movie stars, the influencers, the rich and the poor, all having been levelled by death, to what we truly are. We are nothing without Him. Naked protoplasm, bits of protein, once dressed up to be something and now giving an account of what we did with it.

What we enjoyed in this life, we enjoyed as an act of courtesy from Him. You know that we found it difficult to say just why the rich man was doomed to hell in the story of Lazarus, and we said, well he must have been a sinner to get punished. The fact that he was a rich man is incidental to the story, because the status of a man is given by the grace of God. The rich man and Lazarus were the same at the outset, except one was given riches and one was given poverty. If they leave this world with absolutely nothing, then in death, the rich man and Lazarus are exactly the same, then the sin we have accumulated and Christ, who may be our Saviour, become the important elements of our stories.

I do not think that the disciples of Jesus had ever thought about this. They never looked far enough forward in time, to their demise, to ever consider it. They were more interested in collecting “epaulettes”, of being somebody, being better, and greater than others, and in this they were not unlike the Pharisees, *Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* The wanted to be better, greater than others and they had forgotten the teaching Jesus gave them earlier, *Luk 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. Luk 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

The disciples had not learned the lesson of service, and that was service to God, which means a quiet acceptance of whatever God gives them, even a cruel death like their Master, “*We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do*”. And as servant they had to learn to serve, and that was not by taking the chief seats, by being the greatest, *Luk 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. Luk 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.* In John’s Gospel it was illustrated with washing the disciple’s feet.

If Jesus was prepared to demonstrate that by example, we should be very, very, careful that we do not accumulate honours, whereby we put ourselves in any position of superiority over any other man. If God Himself took the form of a servant, then we should do the same. There can be no room in the church for those who set themselves above others, *Mat 23:8 But none of you should be called a teacher. You have only one teacher, and all of you are like brothers and sisters. Mat 23:9 Don't call anyone on earth your father. All of you have the same Father in heaven. Mat 23:10 None of you should be called the leader. The Messiah is your only leader. Mat 23:11 Whoever is the greatest should be the servant of the others.* Is that so, or do we insist that men run the show instead of Christ, *Luk 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? **but I am among you as he that serveth.***

## 197. The Churches' Judges *Luke 22: 28 - 30*

*Luk 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. Luk 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; Luk 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

We have seen that Christians, if they are Christians, do not seek pre-eminence but the role of a servant, and in this they put all honours aside. The Christian is not taken with honours and he sees his service to Christ alone, *1Pe 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 1Pe 5:3 **Neither as being lords over God's heritage,** but being ensamples to the flock. 1Pe 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

How easily that little worm turns and before we know it, we are listening to the praise of men, becoming partial to the praises of men, and then we have created a faction which divides us, especially from Christ, because we are now no longer a servant of God, *1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; **are ye not carnal?** 1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; **but God gave the increase.***

We have developed the cult of man, an organisation structured by man, ruled by man, which no longer knows Christ. In whose name and person do we speak, *2Co 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*



Some desire pre-eminence, some desire to shut others out and it always has been so. The spirit of Diotrephes is alive and well today as it was then, *3Jn 1:9 I wrote to the church. **But Diotrephes likes to be the number-one leader, and he won't pay any attention to us.** 3Jn 1:10 So if I come, I will remind him of how he has been attacking us with gossip. Not only has he been doing this, but he refuses to welcome any of the Lord's followers who come by. And when other church members want to welcome them, he puts them out of the church. 3Jn 1:11 Dear friend, don't copy the evil deeds of others! Follow the example of people who do kind deeds. They are God's children, but those who are always doing evil have never seen God.* CEV.

Well, having stated the position that disciple's should have, that they should be servants, the Lord seems to contradict Himself, by saying that He now appoints them as kings upon thrones, and judges over Israel. How can servants become kings and judges, ruling and judging men? How can unlearned men do that? Or have we got the whole picture of kingship and judging wrong? I am not interested in what man thinks about judges and kings, but about how God thinks that they should behave. In order to establish that, I want to see God's criteria for these important roles.

Jesus has already hinted that the kings of the nations exercise lordship, but that attitude does not extend to the disciples, *Luk 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. Luk 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and **he that is chief, as he that doth serve.***

The duty of a king is laid out in Deuteronomy, *Deu 17:14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Deu 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, **whom the LORD thy God shall choose:** one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. Deu 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Deu 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: **neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.** Deu 17:18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that **he shall write him a copy of this law** in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: Deu 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: Deu 17:20*

*That **his heart be not lifted up above his brethren**, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.*

Of course, God was the King up to that point in time when they chose an earthly king, and His government was by a full Theocracy, which is a form of government in which one or more deities are recognized as supreme ruling authorities, giving divine guidance to human intermediaries who manage the government's daily affairs. In effect, the king that He would choose, would be obedient to Him, Jehovah, the Lord Almighty, so He would still govern as a theocracy.

Apart from making sure that the king was an Israelite and that he was the one the LORD has chosen, the duties of a king were,

- He should not have many horses, especially those from Egypt.
- He must not have a lot of wives.
- He must not try to get huge amounts of silver and gold.
- He must go to the priests and write out a copy of these laws while they watch.
- Each day he must read and obey these laws, so that he will learn to worship the LORD with fear and trembling.
- He must not think that he's better than everyone else.

He was not, to use the modern phrase, “to milk” his position of privilege for all it was worth. The king was the guardian and champion of the Nation of Israel. “As is the king, so is the nation”, the saying might go, and if you look at the king list, only about 8 out of 39 are considered any good. And the bad kings brought Israel down, for example, *1Ki 15:25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. 1Ki 15:26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, **and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.***

Judges similarly had a similar role as guardians of the Law, *Deu 1:16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and **judge righteously between every man and his brother**, and the stranger that is with him. Deu 1:17 **Ye shall not respect persons in judgment;** but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye **shall not be afraid of the face of man;** for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.....Deu 16:18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Deu 16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Deu 16:20 That which is*

*altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

So the disciples, without any training, are to be appointed to these highly important roles in Israel, which they assume, will continue as a nation, at least in God's eyes for the next few days. Is this so, yes, of course it is, when until after the crucifixion, Israel will cease to exist as an earthly nation in God's eyes? It really is one of the shortest terms in office that you wonder why God appointed them, unless it means something slightly more, and in using the term "Israel" we have to ask what is meant by that, *Rom 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Rom 9:7 **Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham,** are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Rom 9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

The role of the disciples, although I am sure they did not understand it immediately, they did come to grasp the meaning of what Jesus meant, eventually. As we have noted, Peter is against all lordship in the church except Christ, *1Pe 5:1 Church leaders, I am writing to encourage you. I too am a leader, as well as a witness to Christ's suffering, and I will share in his glory when it is shown to us. 1Pe 5:2 Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, **you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care.** Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must. **Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money.** 1Pe 5:3 Don't be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them. CEV.*

How very un-kinglike that is, not to be "bossy", and not to make money. But they were following the good kings and judges of old, yet how did they follow them? They never attained to these positions, kings and judges, while on earth, although many people have elevated them to super saints as if they were. They have been made into something they spoke against and which Christ taught against, and they never sought position after this time. What did Jesus mean when He said, *Luk 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;* It was not an earthly kingdom for sure.

Judging and ruling is very tedious, and unless you like inflicting pain and sorrow on people, Christians are not very suitable to the task, *Luk 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:* If there are matters to be governed on earth, then they are matters which can be left to the least of the brethren, *1Co 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 1Co 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be*

*judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 1Co 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 1Co 6:4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.*

The governance which was being left to these disciples was not by man's way of doing things, it was by God's way. I will also suggest that it was passed down to you as well, because you are the same as them, *Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Every time that we uphold the work of God, every time we uphold His word, we are ruling and judging the house of Israel. There is no rule except by His word. This view is put forth in a sermon by George Keith, at Boston in New-England, on the 14th of June 1702,

That the Doctrine of Christ, or Word of God contained in Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is essentially necessary to the being of the Church of Christ, and every member thereof, as the foundation is essentially necessary to the being of an House, so as that a House can't be, or subsist without a foundation, no more can the Church of Christ, or the particular members thereof, be or subsist without the Doctrine of Christ, and Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures.

The church took this very seriously at the beginning, *Act 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Act 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.* Yet they were continuing from the Old Testament, as the Congregation of Israel, *Act 7:38 This is he, that **was in the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: Act 7:39 **To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.*** As the Belgic confession states,

We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost.

This Church hath been from the beginning of the world and will be to the end thereof, which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal king, which, without subjects He cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved

or supported by God against the rage of the whole world; though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men, to be reduced to nothing, as during the perilous reign of Ahab when nevertheless the Lord reserved unto Him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit.

The Church is the Israel of God, *Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Gal 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and **upon the Israel of God***. So the disciples, and all who uphold God's Word, are ruling the kingdom of Israel. I think this is what Jesus meant when He said, *Luk 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. Luk 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; Luk 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*.

## **198. Peter's Denial *Luke 22: 31 - 34***

*Luk 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: Luk 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Luk 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. Luk 22:34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.*

The Lord is going to do nothing about Peter's sifting, or sieving, but He has prayed "*that thy faith fail not*". That is something we do not expect in our walk with Jesus, to be suddenly given to satan as a toy, to be chewed up by that beast. We thought that coming to Christ was for protection, a relatively easy life, not a life where sudden distress and devilish torment coming upon us. But there is nothing said in the Gospel which should give us cause to think otherwise, and we are in Baca's vale. Here's a summary of Psalm 84 and its reference to the valley of Baca,

Psalm 84 speaks of one of those valleys called the “Valley of Baca.” The Valley of Baca means the Valley of Weeping or the Valley of Tears. It is a place of sorrow and difficulty. The reason it was called “The Valley of Tears” is that the people of God would journey to Jerusalem in order to worship. The journey was perilous, difficult, fearful, and at times sorrowful. The terrain, the desert, and the presence of thieves made it a dangerous journey as well. In Psalm 84:6, God’s people are told to “Make it a well.” The idea is to discover God’s blessings in the midst of the worst of conditions. So how did they make a well, a place of blessing out of a place of sorrow? They turned to God. They trusted God. They allowed God to turn their troubles into blessings, as only He can do.

The psalm begins with a praise of the place where God lives, and where the singer longs to be. The psalm begins and ends addressing God as the Lord of Hosts, a divine epithet. The longing goes further than the place where God lives, yearning for the presence of the “living God”.

“It was the best of times and it was the worst of times”, so begins the novel, “a tale of two cities”, and that is how our spiritual life is too, the best and the worst of times, and you will not appreciate the best without having tasted the worst. The road to the heavenly Jerusalem is often puddled in tears.

But the Christian must learn that in a sinful world, a world getting worse by the day, he must suffer, and will suffer as collateral damage. I often hear on the news of some violent death, some shocking event, where people are bemoaning their lot, and they say, “Where was God in all this?” Then they abuse God and say all manner of things against Him, and use that as an excuse to reject Him. But did they ever show the slightest interest in religion and Christianity in particular, up to the time of that devastating event? No, of course they didn’t, they had no interest in Him, and now they expect Him to respond to their pleas. They are “users”, they only want God for the good that they can get from him, and nothing else. He is like the Genie in the bottle, you only get Him out when you need something.

Job would have had a lot of sympathy with Peter. He went through a similar experience at the hand of satan, *Job 1:6 One day, when the angels had gathered around the LORD, and satan was there with them, Job 1:7 the LORD asked, "satan, where have you been?" satan replied, "I have been going all over the earth." Job 1:8 Then the LORD asked, "What do you think of my servant Job? No one on earth is like him—he is a truly good person, who respects me and refuses to do evil." Job 1:9 "Why shouldn't he respect you?" satan remarked. Job 1:10 "You are like a wall protecting not only him, but his entire family and all his property. You make him successful in whatever he does, and his flocks and herds are everywhere. Job 1:11*

*Try taking away everything he owns, and he will curse you to your face." Job 1:12 The LORD replied, "All right, satan, do what you want with anything that belongs to him, but don't harm Job." Then satan left. CEV.*

Thus begins the long dialogue, where Job's friends try to find out by human reasoning, the cause of his suffering. For 38 chapters, reasons are given to Job, why this is happening, until Jehovah silences them all, *Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? ..... Job 40:2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

The Lord goes on to rebuke the three friends of Job, *Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.* They have to make a considerable sacrifice and have Job intercede for them, and that tells you how much good advice they gave. Zero. 38 chapters of wrangling and it is worth nothing, and to have it in scripture does not show it is profitable, but to the contrary how the arguments of men are unprofitable. It is, I think included for that reason alone.

But what of Job? He had a rough idea of what God was doing to him, *Job 23:8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: Job 23:9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* Well he was right and the story has a happy ending, *Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.*

But we notice this, and it is most significant. There is no explanation as to why God did what He did. Why should God have to explain Himself to mere mortals, *Rom 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made*

*me thus? Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*

We love to find explanations as to what brings our circumstances to pass. We are ever looking out on the world and its people and asking why does this happen, and why does that person suffer, and why does that person look so blessed of God? Why does that good person suffer, what have they done to deserve that, why were they cut short in their prime, where is the meaning in all this, *Psa 73:16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.* He understood, or perceived (as Eli perceived), *1Sa 3:8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli **perceived** that the LORD had called the child*), he did not know “why” but he did see where they would end up.

We see the ways of man, where he goes and what he ends up as, but we seldom have an explanation, like Joseph says to his brothers, *Gen 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.* God’s purposes are achieved despite mans attempts to the contrary, yet we are not given an explanation why it all happened except that, “*God meant it unto good*”, as the Scripture says, *Rom 8:28 We know **that in all things God works for good with those who love him**, those whom he has called according to his purpose.* GNB.

There is in the plans of God, a complexity that our minds do not understand, or ever will, and we have to be content with that, *Rom 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Rom 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Rom 11:35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*

The coming trial upon Peter may not have an explanation but it does have an end, and we should look to the positive side of this. There are two points which we might take away from this, and I hope dear Peter did. The first is, and he knows it because Christ said it, that the Lord has prayed for Him, and whatever Christ asks of the Father, that will the Father do, *Joh 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Joh 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. **And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.** Joh 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* If Christ prays for YOU, then you will have the Father’s blessing.



Secondly, look what he prayed for, that Peters faith doesn't fail, or get eclipsed by events coming, and that when he has undergone the sifting process and is turned about once more, he should strengthen his brothers. He will undergo this process of sifting so that he would have the strength of character to be able to strengthen the weak.

This process of sifting may be a painful process emotionally, but it is character building, though Peter thought that he could overcome the challenge, *Luk 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.* Peter thought that he would be strong enough to stand with Jesus, to go through whatever He went through, to prison and death, but as things would prove he could not.

And before we say, I could do that, and I would not buckle, would we honestly have been stronger than Peter? In this rush of events Peter is thrust into a surreal world. He goes out from the meal, and they are tired and fall asleep, and they cannot watch with Jesus, who knows the reality of His own death. Then Judas comes upon their band, *Joh 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.* Peter stands up for Jesus and draws his sword, and blood, *Joh 18:8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Joh 18:10 **Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.** The servant's name was Malchus. Joh 18:11 **Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath:** the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

Peter so far has stood his ground, determined to fight for his Lord, but receives a rebuke from Him. But Peter, no doubt confused by the unexpected turn of events, none the less follows Jesus to see what would happen, *Joh 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. Joh 18:16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then **went out that other disciple,** which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.* John departs from the room, being known to the high priest.

I imagine that much of the record of the events come from John, who was there, but mostly from Peter, who saw the whole process while warming himself by the fire, *Joh 18:17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? **He saith, I am not.** Joh 18:18 And the servants and*

*officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.*

There begins the three fold denial of Christ which ends with Peter's tears of anguish, *Luk 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. Luk 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. Luk 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Luk 22:62* ***And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.***

Poor Peter, he did so want to save his beloved Lord, he was prepared to follow Him to death, but he had not reckoned with the plan of God, the wiles of the devil and the weakness of the flesh. No matter how carefully you plan, something may still go wrong. In a line in "To a Mouse," by Robert Burns, he says, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft a-gley." Burns meant things go awry or wrong, but as Paul says, they do work for good.

## **199. Things Have Changed *Luke 22: 35 - 38***

*Luk 22:35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Luk 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. Luk 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. Luk 22:38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.*

Let us refresh our memories as to when Jesus first sent the disciples out, *Luk 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. Luk 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. Luk 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. Luk 9:4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. Luk 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. Luk 9:6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.*

It must be said that this was a special dispensation for the disciples, and they would have to revise their opinion on the nature of Divine support from now on. The

miraculous times were fast coming to an end, and people believing on Jesus, because of the miracles that they did, was going to fade from memory. Now begins the hard slog of putting the lessons of discipleship into practice with minimal help. The day was fast approaching when they would act for themselves, *Luk 9:12 Late in the afternoon the twelve apostles came to Jesus and said, "Send the crowd to the villages and farms around here. They need to find a place to stay and something to eat. There is nothing in this place. It is like a desert!" Luk 9:13 Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat." But they replied, "We have only five small loaves of bread and two fish. If we are going to feed all these people, we will have to go and buy food."*

But that said, there is somehow a contradiction between what Jesus says here, and what He says later on, and the attitude of the disciples in the New Testament. Jesus, for whatever the reason He says "*and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one*", teaches His disciples to take "evil" with a resignation, and not to fight back, *Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Mat 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. Mat 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Mat 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

Violence is not a mark of the Christian, *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, **then would my servants fight**, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* I do not recall one Christian in the NT, after the crucifixion, who resorts to violence, but subject themselves to the authorities even if it means unlawful imprisonment or death, *1Pe 3:14 Even if you have to suffer for doing good things, God will bless you. So stop being afraid and don't worry about what people might do. 1Pe 3:15 Honour Christ and let him be the Lord of your life. Always be ready to give an answer when someone asks you about your hope. 1Pe 3:16 Give a kind and respectful answer and keep your conscience clear. This way you will make people ashamed for saying bad things about your good conduct as a follower of Christ. 1Pe 3:17 You are better off to obey God and suffer for doing right than to suffer for doing wrong.* CEV. If Jesus servants would not fight for Him, because He does not have an earthly kingdom, why would they fight at all?

At Gethsemane, when Judas betrays Jesus, they bring the sword out to fight the oppressors, *Luk 22:48 Jesus asked Judas, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Luk 22:49 When Jesus' disciples saw what was about to happen, they asked, "Lord, should we attack them with a sword?" Luk 22:50 One of the disciples even struck at the high priest's servant with his sword and cut off the servant's right*

ear. Luk 22:51 *"Enough of that!" Jesus said. Then he touched the servant's ear and healed it.* CEV. Jesus is against violence as He says in Matthew, Mat 26:52 *Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* Mat 26:53 *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?* Mat 26:54 *But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

Two suggestions as to how we might resolve the difficulty with the "swords", one by Joseph Benson,

These commands to arm themselves against dangers, are to be considered merely as predictions and warnings given them of the dangers and trials they were to meet with. For **the predictions of the prophets are often announced under the form of commands**. Thus Isaiah, foretelling the destruction of the family of the king of Babylon, Isa 14:21 *Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.*

Jeremiah, foretelling in like manner the destruction of the Jews, exhibits God as thus addressing them, Jer 9:17 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come:* Jer 9:18 *And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.*

And in the prophecy of Ezekiel, Eze 39:17 *And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.* Eze 39:18 *Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.* Eze 39:19 *And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.*

And in the Apocalypse, Rev 19:17 *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;* Rev 19:18 *That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both*

*small and great.* This allegoric spirit is carried so far, that orders are given to brute animals to do what the prophet means only to foretell they would do.

*For this prophecy that is written, must yet be accomplished — As all the other predictions of the prophets concerning me must also be: and he was numbered with the transgressors — Prepare, therefore, to meet a most violent persecution; for I, your Leader, am to be treated as a malefactor, and of course you, my followers, will not escape suffering. Nor are these trials at a distance, they are just at hand. For the things which are written concerning me have an end — Are now drawing to a period, are upon the point of being accomplished. And they said, Behold, here are two swords — Our Lord's disciples, mistaking his meaning about the swords, replied, they had two: the reason why they had any at all, probably, was, that they might defend themselves against robbers in their journey from Galilee and Perea; and from the beasts of prey, which in those parts were very frequent, and dangerous in the night- time: And he said unto them, It is enough.*

To show them their mistake, he told them that two swords were sufficient, which it is evident they could not have been for so many men, had he meant what he said in a literal sense. He only meant. This will be a time of extreme danger; to meet which, it will be necessary to be prepared by faith, fortitude, and patience.

Yet another way to interpret Jesus' words, and one that fits within the context of this passage, is related to his disciples. Some of their actions now conflicted with the principles that they were called to embody, and threatened to unravel their message and mission. It is in this sense that they could be the very transgressors with whom Jesus was numbered.

I prefer this explanation as it fits in with the prophecy, *Luk 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors:* The disciples are the transgressors. This relates to verses in Isaiah chapter 53, *Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: **for the transgression of my people was he stricken.** Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou*

*shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and **he was numbered with the transgressors; and** he bare the sin of many, and **made intercession for the transgressors.** The word in Luke for “transgressors” is lawless = ἄνομος.*

Perhaps Jesus is bringing to an end the period of the Law by stating things as they might be under the Law of Moses, but in the new order they will not fight. This must have added more confusion to the disciples. Indeed it brings confusion to me also. Why, when all around the disciples things are falling apart, do we get a message of such obtuseness, such confusion as to the things coming to pass.

I would have expected the clarion call to service to be laid down with absolute clarity, with strength of purpose, to have gathered the troops with an inspiring word that would become one of the greatest of Christian sayings. But no such word is heard from the lips of Christ. It is a distressing moment of confusion, with the disciples not knowing what to do. And our Lord does nothing to ease their fears, and all He says is, “It is enough”, that is all He has to say on the matter.

I have personally found this ministry difficult, and I would not say that I have correctly understood it, but then do you expect me to know everything. I am learning just the same as you are, and this lifetime is not long enough to find out everything, *Joh 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.* If such an unsatisfactory ministry, in terms of understanding, occurs here, at the point of the death of Jesus, the most important event in history, are we to give up on our faith? By no means, and the fact that it occurs here, to test our faith, will show our resolve to follow on, trusting that He will give us enlightenment at some stage.

There is much in the scriptures which we do not know. Much of what we say we know is speculation, trying to fit the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle of Jesus life together. Perhaps we should concentrate on what we do know as the surety of our faith at such times when we encounter the obscure portions of Scripture, *1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 1Co 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 1Co 15:4 And that he was*

*buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 1Co 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 1Co 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

It is obvious to anyone studying the Bible that the verses in Luke contradict what is said elsewhere. The believer in Christ may only infer what Luke means by his words, and we are not in a position to ask him. I have tried to give explanations of it, which may be incorrect or partially correct, and I would not be dogmatic about this.

## **200. Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat *Luke 22: 39 - 46***

*Luk 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. Luk 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. Luk 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Luk 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luk 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Luk 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: **and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.** Luk 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, Luk 22:46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

John's Gospel gives a series of teachings by Jesus before going out, but Mark and Matthew are in line with Luke's narrative, and give more detail on the event, and so I will read them, *Mar 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. Mar 14:33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; Mar 14:34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. Mar 14:35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, **if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.** Mar 14:36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Mar 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Mar 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. Mar 14:39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same*

words. Mar 14:40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. Mar 14:41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Mar 14:42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Mat 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. Mat 26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Mat 26:38 Then saith he unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:** tarry ye here, and watch with me. Mat 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Mat 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Mat 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Mat 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. Mat 26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. Mat 26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Mat 26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Mat 26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

We now go out to the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, with Jesus, and here we gain an insight into the humanity of the Son of man, that I do not see so completely shown elsewhere. I will not go into the two natures in Christ, the Divine and Human natures, but concentrate solely on the Human Nature. In addition I do not want to be as those who treat Jesus as a theological problem, a doctrinal divide, an exercise on paper. He is a person and not a doctrine, He is as human as you and me,

His humanity is expressed in, Heb 2:13 He also said, "I will trust God." Then he said, "Here I am with the children God has given me." Heb 2:14 We are people of flesh and blood. That is why Jesus became one of us. He died to destroy the devil, who had power over death. Heb 2:15 But he also died to rescue all of us who live each day in fear of dying. Heb 2:16 Jesus clearly did not come to help angels, but he did come to help Abraham's descendants. Heb 2:17 **He had to be one of us, so that he could serve God as our merciful and faithful high priest and sacrifice himself for the forgiveness of our sins.** Heb 2:18 And now that Jesus has suffered and was tempted, he can help anyone else who is tempted. CEV.



In John's Gospel, Pilate brings Jesus to the chief priests and officers, and announced, "Behold the Man" *Joh 19:5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!*** The same words were spoken by God, to Samuel about king Saul, *1Sa 9:17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, **Behold the man** whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.* In the Greek it uses ἄνθρωπος = anthrōpos, a human being.

I think that Pilate was going to scourge Jesus and then let Him go. The soldiers, as is their wont, decided to mock and taunt the victim as well, making a crown out of thorns and putting a kingly robe on Him, *Joh 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. Joh 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, Joh 19:3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Joh 19:4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Joh 19:5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! Joh 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. Joh 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because **he made himself the Son of God. Joh 19:8** When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;*

Look, says Pilate, "behold the man", He is not the Son of God, He is an ordinary man, or so He appeared to Pilate. But Pilate miscalculated the offence he would cause to the priests by leaving Jesus dressed in purple, as a derided king, and he is mocking their beliefs, or certainly not taking them seriously enough, and because of this the Roman Governor saw his mistake too late and was afraid. But we are ahead of ourselves, except to state this was clearly "a man" before Pilate.

In the garden we see "a man", with all the frailties of man. A man who knew He was going to go through a time of mocking, beating, pain, humiliation and public death. A man who was subject to the will of the Father, "*if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*". A man who had laid His Eternal Deity at the feet of the Father, and although He could at an instant have called upon Heaven to release Him from this trial, He none the less took the task through to completion, as a man, as a human being, *Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Jesus did that for you and me, unwavering, but what is our daily response? Does it call for our continual thanks and praise or was it as nothing to us? We test the

bounds of love by how much we have been forgiven, *Luk 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* If you see that you have been forgiven a lot, then you will be grateful, so much more than a person who does not see the extent of his forgiveness. The person who just does not see it at all I think is lost.

The death of Jesus must also be seen in the context of our personal sin, *Rom 5:6 Christ died for us at a time when we were helpless and sinful. Rom 5:7 No one is really willing to die for an honest person, though someone might be willing to die for a truly good person. Rom 5:8 But God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful.*

I do not know what it is like to pray as Jesus prayed, “*and being in an **agony** he prayed more earnestly: **and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.***” I do not know what the agony was like for what He suffered, *Heb 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Heb 12:4 **Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*** We sinners capitulate to sin far too readily but not Him, not Jesus. A clue though is given to us as to what was going on, because the word for “agony” in Luke and for “strive” in Hebrews, come from the same root, ἀγωνία, and I think the Jesus was striving against sin, fighting temptation, which He overcame. His blood was not only shed at the cross, it was shed in the garden of Gethsemane, the place where olives were crushed, “great drops of blood”.

The word for “great drops” is θρόμβος, literally clots, clots of blood. Dave Miller PhD, has this to say on the condition,

Luke, the author of the New Testament books of Luke and Acts, who himself, by profession, was a physician. His writings manifest an intimate acquaintance with the technical language of the Greek medical schools of Asia Minor.

Of the four gospel writers, only Dr. Luke referred to Jesus’ ordeal as “agony” (*agonia*). It is because of this agony over things to come that we learn during His prayer “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Only Luke referred to Jesus’ sweat (*idros*)—a much used term in medical language. And only Luke referred to Jesus’ sweat as consisting of great drops of blood (*thromboi haimatos*)—a medical condition alluded to by both Aristotle and Theophrastus. The Greek term *thromboi* (from which we get thrombus, thrombin, et al.) refers to clots of blood.

Bible scholar Richard Lenski commented on the use of this term: “‘As clots,’ *thromboi*, means that the blood mingled with the sweat and thickened the globules so that they fell to the ground in little clots and did not merely stain the skin.”

The Greek word *hosei* (“as it were”) refers to condition, not comparison, as Greek scholar Henry Alford observed: The intention of the Evangelist seems clearly to be, to convey the idea that the sweat was (not *fell* like, but *was*) *like drops of blood*;—i.e., *coloured with blood*,—for so I understand the ὡσεὶ, as just distinguishing the drops *highly coloured with blood*, from *pure blood*.... To suppose that it only *fell like drops of blood* (why not drops of anything else? And drops of blood *from what*, and *where*?) is to nullify the force of the sentence, and make the insertion of αἵματος not only superfluous but absurd.

We can conclude quite justifiably that the terminology used by the gospel writer to refer to the severe mental distress experienced by Jesus was intended to be taken literally, i.e., that the sweat of Jesus became bloody.

A thorough search of the medical literature demonstrates that such a condition, while admittedly rare, does occur in humans. Commonly referred to as hematidrosis or hemohidrosis, this condition results in the excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat. Under conditions of great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can rupture, thus mixing blood with perspiration. This condition has been reported in extreme instances of stress. During the waning years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 76 cases of hematidrosis were studied and classified into categories according to causative factors. The most frequent causes of the phenomenon were found to be “acute fear” and “intense mental contemplation.” While the extent of blood loss generally is minimal, hematidrosis also results in the skin becoming extremely tender and fragile, which would have made Christ’s pending physical insults even more painful.

We can see by this analysis of Jesus suffering, that it was no ordinary suffering, and the poor man was ravaged by the torment of what He was to go through. It was no imaginary suffering, no device of the author to get sympathy, no hyperbole so that you might be willing to accept His affliction. This was not something that was inflicted by men, but was the psychological result of Jesus awareness of the situation in His own mind.

The situation was that mankind was drowning in sin, and the devil was saying to Him that the price He was paying was not worth it because the whole world was against Him, and He was much better off leaving the whole sorry mess and failure behind Him. But He knew that He could defeat Satan, and that there was a remnant to be saved, and the Father could be glorified, so He prayed, *Luk 22:42 "Father, if you will, please don't make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want."* CEV.

His blood was shed in the garden, to show that He was not just a passive sacrifice, a lamb who was sacrificed, the same as any sacrifice, but that He had done something to warrant being that sacrifice. He not only died for sinners and sin, but He had overcome that passions of old Adam, and not sinned once. He overcame the temptations of the devil at the start of His ministry, and here at the very end of His ministry, He shows the same commitment as at the beginning. Now it was more real than ever, there was more at stake, the clock was ticking down, Satan had only seconds to defeat Jesus, but Jesus held on, and His Humanity triumphed.

Then, an angel appeared and strengthened Him, as in, *Act 9:19 And when he had received meat, he was **strengthened**.* That His humanity needed this help showed that He had truly laid His Divinity aside. How did the angel strengthen Him? We will look into that.

Gethsemane shows Jesus humanity but also His worth as the sacrifice for sin. In a manner of speaking, He had won the victory in the garden, and the cross was the statement of this victory.

## 201. The Antidote to Temptation *Luke 22: 39 - 46*

*Luk 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. Luk 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. Luk 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Luk 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luk 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Luk 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luk 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, Luk 22:46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

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I have two questions for you to think about, the first is, if you were a disciple in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, what would you have been praying? The second is if you were that angel that came to Jesus, and you hope to be one, one day, what would you do to strengthen Jesus?

We seldom put ourselves into the position of the disciples or angels, and we look at everything being done for us and do not think about how it was then, and how we would help Jesus. We do not enter into the Gospel narratives as real stories but see them as a movie, where we sit outside of the picture, just observing it and I think it becomes less real because of that. It becomes like those films that come around every Easter or holiday, like “Ben Hur”, an epic, and you know what happens and it does not surprise you or shock you anymore. You learn the dialogue by heart, and gradually lose sight of the profound events, and that is how we view the Gospels. I pray we may all have fresh eye and new thoughts as we read and reread these stories.

The disciples were to pray that they would not enter into temptation, according to Luke, but also according to Matthew, to watch and pray that they did not enter into temptation. They were to be in a state of readiness for whatever was to come, to be awake, *Mat 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.....Mat 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Mat 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

But they fell asleep instead of keeping awake with Jesus, and as you know, one of the best ways to have wandering thoughts and to doze off, is to pray without any real purpose. I think that the disciples were not used to praying yet, and did not see the necessity of praying while Jesus was around, besides Jesus was so effective that they did not see the need to pray. At least they could have prayed for themselves, as Jesus advised them to do. But I am not sure that the disciples prayed much or even prayed at all. Prayer seems to have been the domain of the priests and intellectuals of Jewish society and not so much the ordinary man which is why they needed help, *Luk 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*

If they had any empathy with Jesus, I would have expected them to pray for Jesus, but they do not appear to pray for Him. If they had any knowledge of the impending events, they do not show it, and the sense of urgency is not in their souls. Perhaps it goes back to when Peter prayed the prayer of the devil, *Mat 16:21 From that time*

*forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Mat 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. Mat 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me:** for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

That is one prayer you do not make, you do not ask for Jesus to be spared, you do not ask for that because it is at the core of His ministry, "*how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*" If Christ did not die He cannot be raised, *1Co 15:15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 1Co 15:16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 1Co 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.* Well, I will leave you to think how you might have prayed for Jesus, what you might have prayed for Him.

Then there is the question of the angel, *Luk 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* I wondered who this angel might be since no name is given him. Why is he here, and who sanctioned his appearance when God remained quiet, and was not prepared to take the cup of suffering from Jesus, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*"

This may be a strange thought, but I think the mysterious angel, could be Jesus' guardian angel. It would not be unusual because it would seem that all humans in Christ have their angels. Good angels and evil angels exist and we do battle with the evil, *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* I suppose that before we get to having the good angels, we are infested with evil angels, and have their demons, as shown in extreme by the Gadarenes, *Mat 8:28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. Mat 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

Jesus, being human, would have qualified for a guardian angel, and I suppose that particular angel could have been Michael, and perhaps that is why people confuse Jesus with Michael, because they are so alike. Peter looks like his angel, *Act 12:13*

*And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. Act 12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. Act 12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. **Then said they, It is his angel.***

Angels are a reality of Scripture and occur more times in Luke's Gospel than the others, and he is a hard-nosed doctor who needs proof of the existence of everything. Angels are given the care of little ones that believe, *Mat 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* For the angels are ministering spirits to us, the heirs of His promises, *Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

The angel stood with Jesus, and strengthened Him, like Joshua was strengthened by Moses, *Deu 3:28 But charge Joshua, and **encourage him**, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.* Literally "harden" = **רָחַם** him for the task ahead, to set his face like flint, *Isa 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Isa 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*

But before Jesus face was set like flint, hardened for the task ahead, He had to be strengthened, and this was the work of the angel. One of the things that I remember doing, when I had a dentist's appointment, and I can tell you, the school dentist was a painful experience, was to imagine myself coming out of the surgery, having received treatment. I imagined the pain was over and I had this image in mind to lessen the depressing feeling of going to the dentist. Now I am not saying that I endured anything like Jesus, but I recall that His attitude was similar, *Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*** The angel could have steeled Him for the trial by showing Him the joy that would be in His accomplished redemption.

The angel would have been positive, realistic, truthful, sympathetic, empathetic and above all His friend. Could we do that for Jesus, could we rise above our own circumstance to comfort and strengthen Him? To do so would mean that we have developed those traits in our lives already, that they would be part of our nature, not just something we switch on. How would you strengthen Jesus?

But the disciples did not strengthen Him, rather they fell asleep, *Luk 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, Luk 22:46 And said unto them, **Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*** Here in their drowsy state, Jesus gives them the most powerful advice against temptation, and that temptation can come when we are tired in our bodies. The answer was “prayer”.

I do not intend to tell you how to pray or what to pray for, as it is a very large subject, but perhaps a few things which may help you. I would first of all cut out all prayers for yourself. It always seems so self indulgent, and Jesus does not say your prayers are for the various things that tempt you. If it were, then by that exercise you are giving those temptations an entrance into your imagination by thinking about them and that is where sin begins.

If you pray, surely you want to keep your mind on Jesus to avoid temptation, *2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, **and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*** it is easier to sin when Jesus is absent from our thoughts.

The prayers for others also make us grateful that we do not have the same distresses as others. For example, when you pray for somebody who has a particular illness, you should at the same time give thanks to God that you are not afflicted like them.

One thing I have found as I get older is the need for less sleep, and unfortunately, I sometimes awake in the early hours, and the thoughts that came to me in those times used to be very negative, worrying and self pitying. I thought about this and came to the conclusion that I was being very self-centred. Instead of all that negativity, and instead of all that self-centeredness, I began praying for other people, people that I know well and others not so well. I pray for the aged, the disabled, neighbours, family, friends and so the list goes on. I don't know whether all my prayers get answered, some do, but it has given me a new found sense of purpose and joy, just not thinking about ME.

It is dying to self that kills temptation, *1Pe 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, **but to the will of God.*** It is seeing that you do not really matter, and that you will be whatever God wants you to be. Temptation is always about how you might disobey Jesus, and how you might



become something. Killing off self and concentrating on others is a way of removing temptation.

The temptation in the Garden of Eden, was all about whether God could be trusted to tell the truth, *Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:* and man with his small brain and lack of knowledge was to be the arbiter of that truth. And although the devil lied to them and they were deeply ashamed, it wasn't that they had not just distrusted the Lord, but that they wanted the forbidden fruit more than they wanted the truth. And temptation is about disobedience to Jesus, and the only way to stop it is to kill it, by death to self.

Paul puts it this way, *1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 1Ti 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 1Ti 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

## 202. It is Enough *Luke 22: 47 - 51*

*Luk 22:47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. Luk 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Luk 22:49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? Luk 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. Luk 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

This event has a parallel in the OT, in the life and times of king David, in particular when Absalom, David's son, conspired to take the kingdom of Israel from him, *2Sa 15:10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. 2Sa 15:11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. 2Sa 15:12 **And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.***

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Absalom, the good looking son of David, had hatched a plot to remove his father from the throne,

*2Sa 14:25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 2Sa 14:26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. Absalom was in Hebron and David had enough time to make his escape from Jerusalem, 2Sa 15:10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.*

The usurpation of his kingdom came with the help of his trusted advisor, Ahithophel, and the new administration partially succeeded, when David is exiled from Jerusalem, *2Sa 15:23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: **the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron**, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. 2Sa 15:24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. 2Sa 15:25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: 2Sa 15:26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*

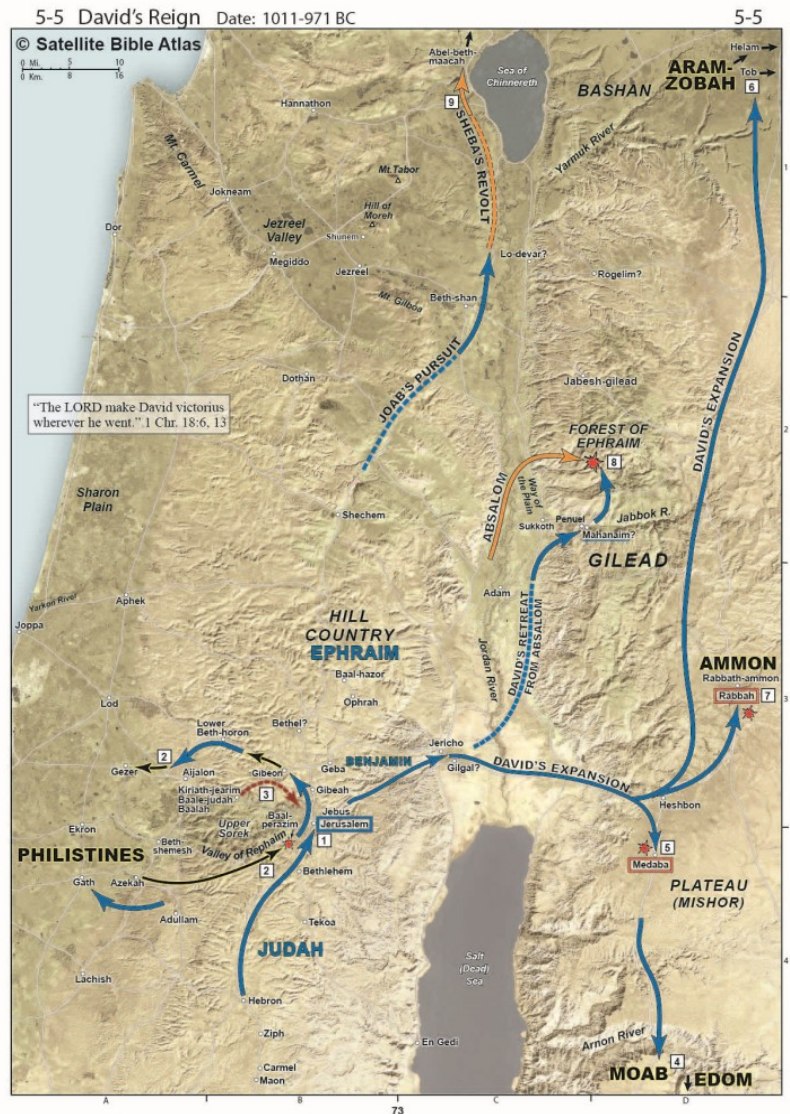
David, like Jesus, is rejected by the Nation of Israel, and leaves the City of Jerusalem by the same route, travelled a millennia, 1000 years before, by David. He crosses the black brook, the brook Kidron in the valley of Kidron, to go up the slopes of the Mount of Olives, and it must have been near the same place that Jesus was betrayed by Judas. The black brook might have inspired the words of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, *Psa 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Another event seems to confirm this comparison, for both Ahithophel and Judas hang themselves, *2Sa 17:22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan. 2Sa 17:23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and **hanged himself**, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.*

Ahithophel was David's counsellor, and I imagine they were very close to start with, *1Ch 27:32 Also Jonathan David's uncle was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons: 1Ch 27:33 And **Ahithophel was the king's counsellor**: and **Hushai the Archite was the king's companion**: 1Ch 27:34 And after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the general of the king's army was Joab.* Somewhere along life's road Ahithophel went over to Absalom, but the ever loyal Hushai kept with David. He remained behind in Jerusalem and defeated the plans of Absalom.

What caused Ahithophel to rebel against David? It could be as a result of David taking Bathsheba and killing her husband Urijah. Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather, *2Sa 11:3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this **Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam**, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?....2Sa 23:34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, **Eliam the son of Ahithophel** the Gilonite.*

In Psalm 41, we have a comment by David on his familiar friend, *Psa 41:8 An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more. Psa 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of*



*my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*, which is alluded to in John's Gospel, *Joh 13:18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, **He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.*** The "familiar friend" was for David, Ahithophel, for Jesus, Judas. Here's what Charles Spurgeon has to say in his "Treasury of David",

Here is the climax of the sufferer's woe, and he places before it the emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villany would scarcely be believed. "*Mine own familiar friend.*" "The man of my peace," so runs the original, with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had aforetime ministered to my peace and comfort.

This was Ahithophel to David, and Iscariot with our Lord. Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the Great Teacher, hearing his secret thoughts, and, as it were, allowed to read his very heart. "*Et tu Brute?*" said the expiring Caesar. The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded his hand. "*In whom I trusted.*" Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college. Where we place great confidence an unkind act is the more severely felt. "*Which did eat of my bread.*" Not only as a guest but as a dependant, a pensioner at my board. Judas dipped in the same dish with his Lord, and hence the more accursed was his treachery in his selling his Master for a slave's price. "*Hath lifted up his heel against me.*"

Not merely turned his back on me, but left me with a heavy kick such as a vicious horse might give. Hard is it to be spurned in our need by those who formerly fed at our table. It is noteworthy that the Redeemer applied only the last words of this verse to Judas, perhaps because, knowing his duplicity, he had never made a familiar friend of him in the fullest sense, and had not placed implicit trust in him.

Infernal malice so planned it that every circumstance in Jesus' death should add wormwood to it; and the betrayal was one of the bitterest drops of gall. We are indeed, wretched when our *quondam* (former) friend becomes our relentless foe, when confidence is betrayed, when all the rites of hospitality are perverted, and ingratitude is the only return for kindness; yet in so deplorable a case we may cast ourselves upon the faithfulness of God, who, having delivered our Covenant Head, is in verity engaged to be the very present help of all for whom that covenant was made.

The comparisons with David cease at the point Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, *Luk 22:47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. Luk 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

The confusion that must have been in the minds of the disciples, when this party approaches is shown by the confusion in themselves over what action they should take, *Luk 22:49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?* And the Lord does not answer them but they act anyway, *Luk 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.* This act sets the Christian standard of behaviour ever after, *Luk 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.* I think He means for Peter to stop his hand, to proceed no further, but put up his sword, He is saying, “enough of that”. They had gone too far, and if ever a person should use a weapon in defence of himself, Christianity or Christ, they have gone too far as well.

Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* He said that to Pontius Pilate, but according to Matthew, He says this to the disciples after they had struck off the ear of Malchus, *Mat 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Mat 26:53 **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?** Mat 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

How do we think that we can work righteousness by being angry, *Jas 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh **not** the righteousness of God.* The laws of vengeance, the Lex Talionis, came from an Older Covenant, and it was given not to obtain righteousness, but to ease the demands of a hard heart, *Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

How do we think that vengeance will gain victory for Christ and peace for men, *Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Rom 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Rom 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

That is the dilemma for the Christian, and has been through the ages, and a consequence, a compromise, has been non-combatant support of the men fighting, as if that absolves you as a non-combatant, from the act of killing. We used to have a law of “hue and cry”, which was the practice in medieval England whereby a person could call out loudly for help in pursuing a suspected criminal. All who heard the call were obliged by law to join in the chase; failure to do so would incur a heavy fine and any misuse of the hue and cry was also punishable. The idea was of collective responsibility, and in a war situation helping someone to kill is as bad as killing, since war is a collective responsibility.

In a violent and brutal time, when religious killing was allowed, the Christians did not employ this method of gaining superiority over others. The early church did not employ violence in pursuit of its objectives, it did not pursue violence in pursuit of the state objectives, it did not pursue violence to protect self or its own people. Stephen’s death at the hands of Saul and the Sanhedrin, did not come with the snivelling cry of a defeated man, begging for his life, neither did it come with a call for vengeance against those who killed him.

Dignified until the end, his death is recorded. *Act 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Act 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, Act 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Act 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, Act 7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. Act 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Act 7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

Far from revenge, which is what the devil would have made him seek, Stephen asks for their forgiveness, “*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*”. There is no violence in the Gospel, and those who use violence compartmentalise their “Christianity” and have another compartment for violence, and thereby are schizophrenics.

It seems to me remarkable the people do not see that violence and war is a machine of the devil. In fact, I would call war “satan’s meat grinder”, because all that you gain from war is death and destruction, “take death give death”. You blast civilisations and then spend years rebuilding them before blasting them again, in an endless cycle of destruction and rebuilding. And you call this progress and civilisation! The millions who died in war won nothing for themselves, and looking at



the legacy of the war and the downward morality of this generation, those who gave their lives must be turning in their graves.

No wonder Jesus said, **“it is enough”**.

### 203. This is Your Hour Part 1 *Luke 22: 52 - 53*

*Luk 22:52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? Luk 22:53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

Just a few more words on our subject of war and the Christian, and it relates to the subject of self-defence. Is self defence allowed or should we just submit to whatever authority lays on us? Jesus teaches us, *Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Mat 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. Mat 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Mat 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.* This is quite plain and straight forward, we do not retaliate.

The state exists to protect us whatever political opinion they have, *Rom 13:1 Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Rom 13:2 Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. Rom 13:3 For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of those in authority? Then do what is good, and they will praise you, Rom 13:4 because they are God's servants working for your own good. But if you do evil, then be afraid of them, because their power to punish is real. They are God's servants and carry out God's punishment on those who do evil.* GNB. If the state does evil, you do not have to obey them, but you should consider your position in the light of what God is doing at the time, and you do not use violence to make your case.

And that takes us to Jesus and His arrest by the quasi Government body of the chief priests and the captains of the Temple. The Government of the people was quite complicated as this article in Britannica suggests,

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Although nominally in charge of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea, the Roman prefect did not govern his area directly. Instead, he relied on local leaders. The prefect and his small army lived in the predominantly Gentile city Caesarea, on the Mediterranean coast, about two days' march from Jerusalem. They came to Jerusalem only to ensure peace during the pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Weeks (Shabuoth), and Booths (Sukkoth)—when large crowds and patriotic themes sometimes combined to spark unrest or uprisings.

On a day-to-day basis Jerusalem was governed by the high priest. Assisted by a council, he had the difficult task of mediating between the remote Roman prefect and the local populace, which was hostile toward pagans and wanted to be free of foreign interference. His political responsibility was to maintain order and to see that tribute was paid. Caiaphas, the high priest during Jesus' adulthood, held the office from about 18 to 36 AD, longer than anyone else during the Roman period, indicating that he was a successful and reliable diplomat. Since he and Pilate were in power together for 10 years, they must have collaborated successfully.

The priests were keeping order, in their minds, to avoid trouble at this pilgrimage feast of Passover, to keep the status quo and not to cause trouble with the Romans. The popularity of this Galilean Jesus had already been seen by his entry to Jerusalem, when the crowd hailed Him with palm branches. The Jews were desperate to keep the peace, *Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and **the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.** Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; Joh 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.*

The arrest of Jesus and charging Him with blasphemy was a way of stopping His popularity and also stopping the Jewish nation from following Him, and so defuse the situation in Jerusalem. It would however need the later assistance of the Romans, *Luk 23:1 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. Luk 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.*



There is one other very important element if not the most important, fighting to have Jesus killed, “the power of darkness”. It is not something we give a lot of attention to, out of sight becomes out of minds, but it is the Christians greatest enemy, *Eph 6:12 We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.* CEV. Very few people go into this subject because it is disturbing and often confusing, which is just the way the devil wants it to be.

What is evil? It was part of the test of mans obedience, *Gen 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*** This tree contained the forbidden fruit of “knowledge”, and it stood in the garden, quite innocuous, passive, a test of the human soul, whether he would get “knowledge” from God, or whether he would go round Him and take it without God. And as you know, Eve decided, from her own reasoning, to jettison God in the search for knowledge. And so it has been ever since, that mankind has decided to go around God in the search for knowledge, and make a universe without God, where man imagined that God was dead, and eventually when the time came, they actually killed Him on the cross.

This led to the triumph of evil among that growing population of mankind, which God decreed to be brought to an end, *Gen 6:5 And Jehovah saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the day long.* LITV. What man imagined in his heart was evil, and I think that because of God’s judgement upon man, we can assume evil and sin are counterparts, and if I was to distinguish the two, I would say evil was the principle and sin was the commission of evil. In other words sin is evil in practice, sin is doing evil.

What is the role of evil? It was the thing which God hated, and it was not part of His character, *Zec 8:17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.* In God’s realm, it was condemned as being contrary to His divine nature. So all the individuals that God created were under Him to obey Him, and to do no evil.

In the realm which God calls heaven, another temporal realm, His created beings had rebelled. These beings He called angels, and there were good and bad angels, *Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: **Michael and his angels** fought against the dragon; and **the dragon fought and his angels,** Rev 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the*

*whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* This event could be placed before the Creation of this earth.

Whatever form the fighting took, it never resulted in the “death” of the combatants, and we are left to ponder what form this fighting took. Perhaps in this realm of Creation where the angels lived, was a realm where existence, once given, can change but never be extinguished. In other words, like men, they continue forever, only they undergo a change of circumstance, so that with men they either live in hell or heaven, but they continue to live. And the angels too have a similar fate, *Mat 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* When God makes something, calls something into existence, He may change it, but for some reason, he does not destroy it.

God exists beyond time and space, and the created realms do not impose limits upon Him, as He is far beyond that, *1Ti 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1Ti 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 1Ti 6:16 **Who only hath immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.* God alone possess immortality and it is given but not a right. As well as a place called heaven, a place called hell was made, as a place for all evil to be contained.

The difference between angels and humans, is that humans self-replicate and angels do not, *Luk 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: Luk 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Luk 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* That is, humans replicate in this temporal realm, and angels do not self-replicate in their temporal realm. When humans enter the realm of angels they do not procreate. So the realm God has provided for us is a place where we do not produce life.

The only way devils could get children is by possessing the earthly humans, in fact, the devil fathers' children by this, *Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

All men are, through the sin of Adam, children of the devil, *Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.* All men are in this state prior to receiving Christ, *1Jn 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* This demonic influence over the whole race of Adam may manifest itself in overt or covert demon possession, and oppression. I will suggest that all men are influenced by satan, and all have a demonic power influencing them if not possessing them as well.

God appoints guardian angels to his children when they are delivered into a new life by Jesus. But what did the devils do at the beginning, when there were so few people to influence and disobey God? Did they all gang up on poor Adam, or was there a power to stop them? God said, *Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* This word is echoed in the New Covenant of Christ, *Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.* He does not immediately perform this word but it is implemented by Christ. It is known as the “proteveangelion”.

In Christianity, Genesis 3:15 is known as the protevangelium. This is a compound of two Greek words, *protos* meaning "first" and *evangelion* meaning "good news" or "gospel". Thus, the verse is commonly referred to as the first mention in the Bible of the "good news" of salvation. The verse introduces two elements previously unknown in the Garden of Eden, elements that are the basis of Christianity—the curse on mankind because of Adam’s sin and God’s provision for a Saviour from sin who would take the curse upon Himself. Satan’s plan was to be thwarted.

You can see that the devil was set on a war with God, but no clear reason is given for, and perhaps that is no business of ours. We do not hear a lot about satan after Genesis, but we do hear a lot about sin in Exodus. Job to the contrary deals a lot with the affect of satan, and Job, we think, occurred about the same time as Moses was writing, if not before, as Job does priestly tasks himself as the head of the family.

What is surprising is the extremely cordial relationship that God has with satan, *Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* Although God has cursed the serpent He none-the-less does not remove the devil from His affairs and His government at this time and it is a very strange relationship. God continues to give satan the impression that He is not going to punish him.

I will conclude this study, which is looking at the power of satan, but I leave you to think on what we have said so far because it is important.

## 204. This is Your Hour Part 2 *Luke 22: 53 cont.*

*Luk 22:53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

We continue our look at the evil that culminated in the death of Jesus the Messiah. The devil seems to be more obvious in the scripture than the Messiah, in the early part of the OT, Who as I have said, slowly emerges as a person, the Son of God. The Messiah was there, and that is beyond question, but He appeared in types and shadows in the early parts of the OT, hiding in plain sight. The devil is much clearer as a person, but as the Messiah is revealed, particularly in the prophets of Israel, so the role of the devil or satan becomes even clearer and the heavens are opened to give us a view of what is going on behind the scenes, so to speak.

The term satan can also mean “adversary”, in fact David is “satan”, a supposed adversary of Achish the Philistine king, *1Sa 29:3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day? 1Sa 29:4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, **Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary (שָׂטָן = satan) to us:** for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?* David is not “satan” as an evil entity, but as an adversary, but the satan, the evil one, God’s adversary, is a real person and he conflicts with the Lord continually.

Because we do not often have a sight of the “so called” unseen world, we tend to forget that it exists, and we only consider events as having their origin in this reality. This is a false notion, as we learn from the time of Elisha, *2Ki 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. **And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.** 2Ki 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said,*

*Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. 2Ki 6:19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. 2Ki 6:20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. 2Ki 6:21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? 2Ki 6:22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. 2Ki 6:23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*

The young man saw what Elishah the prophet could clearly see, that there was a heavenly host was with him, and not only that, that the Lord caused the people to be “blind” and led them to Samaria where they were surrounded and captured. Now an ordinary person, not privy to the full meaning of the events, would probably say that the Syrians made a mistake in battle and were captured because of this mistake. But the events leading up to their defeat have another interpretation in the light of heaven fighting the battle.

In Hezekiah’s time he too is given a glimpse, after he is taunted by “Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria (Sennacherib), his master hath sent to reproach the living God”, by the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, *2Ki 19:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. 2Ki 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 2Ki 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 2Ki 19:35 **And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.** 2Ki 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*

Non-supernatural explanations of this event abound,

Herodotus wrote that the Assyrian army was overrun by mice when attacking Egypt. Some Biblical scholars take this to an allusion that the Assyrian army suffered the effects of a mouse- or rat-borne disease such as bubonic plague. Even without relying on that explanation, John Bright

suggested it was an epidemic of some kind that saved Jerusalem. The Babylonian historian Berossus also wrote that it was a plague that defeated the Assyrian army in the siege.

They neglect the fact the whole army was smitten in one night, and Israel did not suffer casualties. If heaven “fights” in the world conflicts, we must review our understanding of wars, why they happen and what they achieve, because it is still the same world in which God operates, and we have to take that into account. We must also consider the intrusion of “aliens, UFO’s and extraterrestrials”, as being the misinterpretation of spiritual phenomenon, which might be of divine origin or demonic origin. Just what they intend to show is unclear at present.

There are a number of other occasions when the unseen world breaks into our world, for example, when David numbers Israel and suffers a plague from God, the demise of Nebuchadnezzar who becomes a beast of the field for his arrogance to God, the appearance of one like the Son of Man walking with the 3 captives in the fiery furnace, the angels battling the prince of Persia, Zechariah with satan standing at his right hand, the four horsemen roving through the earth, Ezekiel’s vision of God’s celestial transport, and many others, all attest to the reality of the unseen realm.

I want to consider one event in detail because it shows a battle between good and evil. It happens that Daniel was in prayer for understanding a vision of the end times, *Dan 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. Dan 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.*

There is a time delay in answering Daniel, a delay of 21 days, which has a spiritual reason, *Dan 10:8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Dan 10:9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. Dan 10:10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. Dan 10:11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. Dan 10:13 **But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days:** but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained*

*there with the kings of Persia. Dan 10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.*

Instead of my comments, I will let the comments F B Meyer, with whom I agree, stand here,

This chapter gives a glimpse into the great conflict which is always in progress between heaven and hell. For three weeks the radiant Being who came to Daniel as he prayed and fasted by the great river, was withstood by the mighty fallen spirit, who was concerned with the destinies of the kingdom of Persia; and it was only when he was succoured and reinforced that he was able to accomplish the divine errand, Dan 10:13.

What a revelation is here, that probably each heathen country is ruled by some wicked spirit in the high places; that the fight is at times almost overpowering even for bright unfallen angels; and that the blessings which are ours are sometimes delayed because of the storms that sweep the ocean through which they come. Perhaps by our prayer we are able to throw an ounce-weight into the scale, and turn the battle. How reassuring the touch of that hand and tender the address of that voice. Who cannot be strong, when strengthened by the right hand of God? Go forth into the fight of another day! God holds thy right hand. Be true and strong; thou canst not fail!

And from the pen of the good Dr Gill, this very interesting comment,

....but an evil angel, either satan, the prince and god of this world, or one of his principal angels under him, employed by him to do what mischief he could in the court of Persia, against the people of God, the Jews; and with this sense agree the contests ascribed to Satan and the Angel of the Lord concerning Joshua, Zec 3:1 and to Michael and the devil disputing about the body of Moses, Jud 1:9 and to Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, warring in heaven, Rev 12:7, now Gabriel's business in the court of Persia was to work upon the minds of the king of Persia and his nobles, and to influence their counsels, and put them on such measures as would be in favour of the Jews, and be encouraging to them to go on in the rebuilding of their city and temple: in this he was withstood and opposed by an evil spirit that counterworked him; by exasperating the spirit of Cambyses against them; by stirring up the Samaritans to corrupt the Persian courtiers with gifts, to take their part against the Jews; and by influencing them to accept of their gifts, and act in their favour; and this business on the angel's hands, to oppose these

measures, detained him at the Persian court for the three weeks Daniel had been fasting and praying:

Just how this warfare is conducted, I do not know, but that it surely is, and that it parallels what is happening on earth, even though we scarce glimpse it. And so it is that satan and his conspirators, at every opportunity, attempt to thwart the plans of God among mankind, and the worst thing about that is that men are unaware of it. The devil is very active when Jesus is born, with Herod playing the role of the devils executioner. Jesus escapes but is tested by satan at the start of His ministry for 40 days, *Mar 1:12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. Mar 1:13 And he was **there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan**; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.*

Then begins Jesus ministry when there are 12 occasions where He casts out demons from people possessed. The battles with satan over the soul of man are not recorded, but many hundreds of people came to Jesus and the power of satan over them was broken, *Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

Now the climax of the battle with satan draws near at the Crucifixion, *Luk 22:53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* The devil will come up against Jesus, but it is not known by anyone, by either angel or demon, whether Jesus is capable of carrying His work to a conclusion. Again I say, no one then had any knowledge of the future, and they did not have the magical rear view mirror as we do to see the accomplishment of Christ.

The future was dark for the disciples. The future was also dark for satan, because he also did not understand the OT prophets, *1Pe 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 1Pe 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1Pe 1:12 **Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things**, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.* The outcome was unknown.

This is I think why satan kept to his task, because he was ignorant of the outcome, but confident that he would win and that Jesus would become another failed messiah, as Gamaliel said of others, *Act 5:34 Then stood there up one in the*



*council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; Act 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. Act 5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. Act 5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. Act 5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: Act 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

A great victory over mankind by satan had been won in Eden, and every man that satan had tried, every man of the human race had a weakness, that led that race to sin. Job whom we read about is typical of men, *Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. Job 2:5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

Yes, satan had always found a weakness in man, and although satan had stripped Job of his family, he still had a weakness, and given time it would show itself. And although Job did not curse God, he had the wrong world view and God intervenes to set Job and his “friends” right. If God had not stepped in, well, Job might just have cursed God, because Job was at his wits end to understand why he was suffering. You no doubt have heard of people who turn on God when He does something that they cannot understand. God stops Job’s trial by intervention, and as we have suggested before, no explanation is given to Job.

So here we are, on the eve of the crucifixion, all hope abandoned, the light is slowly going out, darkness is descending, “**this is your hour, and the power of darkness**”. The devil must have smiled a devilish smile at the anticipation of victory. From now on it was up to Jesus and the quality of the Man, whether He would endure the humiliation, shame and punishment and overcome the accuser.

## 205. Peter Wept Bitterly *Luke 22: 54 - 62*

*Luk 22:54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. Luk 22:55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. Luk 22:56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. Luk 22:57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. Luk 22:58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. Luk 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. Luk 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. Luk 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Luk 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

There are two types of sorrow, *2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* Godly sorrow, sorrow after a godly fashion, works in the soul of man, to give him a repentant spirit, and will lead to his salvation. Godly sorrow feels for other people whom it has let down, it sorrows for the pain and hurt it has caused, it bitterly regrets what it has done.

Worldly sorrow, the self pitying sorrow, poor me, the sorrow that whilst seeing it has committed wrong does not sorrow for the harm it has done to others, does not care deeply for the offences caused to others. It is almost crying for having been found out, which it would not have done if its secrecy could be maintained. This worldly sorrow works death in the individual, in redemptive terms it is the death of the soul.

Here we have two persons who fit these two descriptions, Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot. Both had sat under Jesus ministry, both had been companions on the roads of Galilee, both had seen the miracles, both had been influenced by Jesus and both remained sinners. Yet one came back to Jesus and one did not.

Like king David, who commits so many public sins, he is sorrowful, but David still endures the punishment for his sin, *2Sa 12:9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 2Sa 12:10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; **because thou hast despised me**, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 2Sa 12:11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, **and I will take thy wives***

***before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.*** 2Sa 12:12 *For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.* 2Sa 12:13 *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.* 2Sa 12:14 *Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

The forgiveness of sin does not mean that it all goes away, all the things which have been caused by our evil, and that it has no longer any consequences for us, and is somehow conveniently swept under the carpet. The forgiveness of sin does not absolve us from the actions of those sins, although God forgives us. Besides, we have often involved others in our sins and they in turn have sinned because of us. As with David, “*The LORD also hath put away thy sin*”, the charge against you is dropped from God’s position, but the consequences may result in collateral damage here, “*because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die*”.

For this reason I do not like the flawed analogy of how salvation works, how you are saved, which is likened to a man in court having someone in to pay his fine, and he becomes a free man. Jesus takes your sin, but He does not take the consequences of it, not in this life. The man with no further responsibilities, released by someone else paying a fine, is not true from David’s point of view. The man on the cross who repented was “saved”, *Luk 23:43 Jesus replied, “I promise that today you will be with me in paradise.”* CEV. But he did not get immediately out of his agony, and he still had to endure the punishment for his crime, the death on the cross, although he was forgiven. Forgiveness does not cancel the consequences of sin.

It may be summed up in the verses, *Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* *Gal 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* The harvest of sin will still be made, even if the sower has his sin forgiven. The effects of your sin, like ripples on a pond, will spread out, and there is not much that you will be able to do about it. There is restoration, if it is some pecuniary loss which you brought about, for example, by stealing. But not all crimes are so easily undone and may linger in the world.

Here is an interesting story that I will use to illustrate my point,

Commander Mitsuo Fuchida (1902–1976) of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service is perhaps best known for leading the first wave of bomber and fighter planes during Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour. At 7:40 a.m. on

December 7, 1941, he sent up the green flare from his plane signalling the order to attack; and he later ordered his radio operator to send the message “Tora! Tora! Tora!,” informing the Japanese that they had achieved complete surprise. The word *tora* (虎) means “tiger” in Japanese, but in this case is an abbreviated radio codeword, an acronym for *totsugeki raigeki* (突撃雷撃), literally meaning “lightning attack,” indicating to his superiors that the objective of complete surprise had been achieved. (In 1970 *Tora! Tora! Tora!* was the title of a cinematic dramatization of the attack.) The attack on the Hawaiian US Navy base resulted in 2,403 American and 64 Japanese deaths. The following day the United States officially declared war on Japan and entered World War II.

Fuchida served Japan throughout the war. He once again escaped possible death when an emergency appendectomy left him on the bridge of the aircraft carrier *Akagi* instead of flying a plane when the United States attacked during the Battle of Midway. Later, having broken both ankles when thrown by an explosion, he became a staff officer with Vice Adm. Kakuji Kakuta. Ordered to Tokyo just before Kakuta failed to stop the American liberation of Guam, he would otherwise have participated with Kakuta in ritual suicide by *seppuku*. “Again the sword of death had missed me only by inches,” he told reporter Hal Drake in 1971.

One of his tasks was to inspect the city of Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped—again he was the only one of his party not to die, this time from radiation poisoning. (He would have by original orders been *in* Hiroshima when the bomb exploded on August 6, but was abruptly sent to Yamato instead on August 5 for an intelligence briefing.) After returning to his family and their chicken farm, he later recalled, “Life had no taste or meaning. ... I had missed death so many times and for what? What did it all mean?”

After the war a number of Japanese military personnel were put on trial for war crimes relating to their treatment of prisoners of war. Fuchida, called on to testify, felt the trials were a sham. He had harboured resentment of the United States for decades due to its restrictions on Asian immigration, and he believed the Americans had treated Japanese POWs just as badly. He sought out recently released POWs to gather evidence. It was then he met his former flight engineer Kazuo Kanegasaki, presumed to have died at the Battle of Midway, who had instead been taken prisoner. Rather than telling a story of abuse and torture by Americans, the man told him of a young American woman, Peggy Covell, who treated him and his fellow prisoners with great kindness even though Japanese soldiers had killed

her missionary parents in the Philippines. Fuchida was astounded. The code of the warrior not only permitted revenge, it demanded it; but this woman declined revenge and offered compassion to Japanese prisoners.

This sparked Fuchida's interest in Christianity. He soon encountered the testimony of Jacob DeShazer, an American POW who shared his story of finding God in a Japanese camp in *I Was a Prisoner of Japan* (1950). In September 1949 Fuchida became a Christian. "Looking back," he said later, "I can see now that the Lord had laid his hand upon me so that I might serve him."

Fuchida established the Captain Fuchida Evangelistical Association and began to travel full time sharing a presentation of his conversion story. In his autobiography, *From Pearl Harbor to Calvary* (1959), he wrote, "I remember the thrill that was mine when, in one of my first [evangelistic] meetings, I led my first soul to Christ in America. And he was one of my own countrymen." In 1952 he toured with the Worldwide Christian Missionary Army of Sky Pilots. Over the years Fuchida authored a number of books including the autobiography and an account of the Battle of Midway. He died in Japan at age 73. —*Matt Forster*.

Fuchida had committed many sins which continued to echo around the world, not least the killing of service personnel who had wives and children, who would go on carrying their grief with them. There was the damage to property, businesses and to the lives of many more people who would suffer deprivation and death, not to be forgotten his contribution to the death of his own people that occurred in Hiroshima. 100,000 people died because Japan pursued an unrelenting war and Fuchida was one of those fuelling the fighting. Fuchida came to Christ but the sin he committed continued to infest the world.

And so to dear brother Peter, who was writing his place in the story of Christ as one of the weaklings of the faith, and not just Peter, but all of the disciples, *Mat 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. **Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*** But before you and I start thinking that we would be different, we would hold the line, we would not capitulate so easily, I do not think we would have acted any differently. We would have bowed to Jesus accusers and denied him. Why do I say that? Because we continue to do so, daily, by our attitude to Christ. We do not commit the same sort of denial as Peter, by we none the less deny Him in our day to day living.



Three times in the space of an hour or so he denied Christ. Was this really any different than a betrayal by Judas? I do not think that Peter saw it as any different, and this poor fisherman, alone, a nobody in the world, was cast into the despair of one without a hope, especially when the cock crew, and most especially when Jesus looked at him, *Luk 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Luk 22:62* ***And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.***

This man Jesus had trusted, among the three of the mighty disciples, he was a leader, but he had failed. He had failed like we would have failed. This simple Galilean fisherman was out of his depth, mingling with the chief priests, Pharisees and Romans. He was brave but with Jesus taken captive that bravery slipped away until he was alone, and then he was surrounded by all who would be his enemy, and he melted before the onslaught as snow before the rising sun.

It was a lesson that he would find with him, haunting him until his dying day. He would never let his Master down again if given another chance. Sometimes, all of us get into his place, all of us have had something that we wish to heaven we had never done and that events steels us for the future. Unlike poor Peter, our sins are kept secret, whereas his have been shouted out around the world. But also his teachings have gone out and we see in his life the forgiveness of Christ.

Peter disappears in his grief and we do not see or hear of him for a number of days. We can imagine that the poor man continued to weep for what had happened, until Jesus forgave him.

## **206. Mockery *Luke 22: 63 - 71***

*Luk 22:63 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. Luk 22:64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? Luk 22:65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. Luk 22:66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Luk 22:67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: Luk 22:68 And if I also ask you, ye will*

*not answer me, nor let me go. Luk 22:69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Luk 22:70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. Luk 22:71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.*

“Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me”, so go the words of an old rhyme, and I am not sure that Jesus took too much note of His accusers words, *Mar 14:61 **But he held his peace, and answered nothing.** Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? Mar 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

There is a fine line between ridicule, irony, sarcasm, mockery and so on, when we make a remark about somebody. For example, could we not accuse Jesus of this very thing, mockery, when He talks to the Pharisees and lawyers, *Luk 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Luk 7:31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? Luk 7:32 **They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.** Luk 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. Luk 7:34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! Luk 7:35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

Is it wrong to make a point, by making a comparison between children playing and disagreeing, and grownups rejecting the teaching of God? It is not done with malice of forethought but to show the men what they are. It may be derisive of the Pharisees but is that wrong? We can take it in a number of ways, but when it is used in good humour is it wrong? When it makes a good point is that wrong?

Mockery or mocking is the act of insulting or making light of a person or other thing, sometimes merely by taunting, but often by making a caricature, purporting to engage in imitation, in a way that highlights unflattering characteristics. Mockery can be done in a light hearted and gentle way, but can also be cruel and hateful, such that it "conjures images of corrosion, deliberate degradation, even subversion; thus, 'to laugh at in contempt, to make sport of'. Mockery appears to be unique to humans, and serves a number of psychological functions, such as reducing the perceived imbalance of power between authority figures and common people. Examples of mockery can be found in literature and the arts.

The people who mocked Jesus were presumably the temple guards, the priests and the scribes, but nobody censured it or stopped the mockery. That tells us something of the character of the people doing the mockery, they despise the Lord, *Pro 17:5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.* People are not to be mocked for being beggars, with nothing to their name, and you stand by the grace of God so you should pity them. It is a rule of blessing not to be a mocker, *Psa 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Psa 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

Les Giblin, in his famous book *The Art of Dealing with People* says, "Don't ever be sarcastic. It might get a momentary laugh in a group, but the person won't forget." So don't do that with friends. Paul reminds us to speak words that build others up and not tear them down, *Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

George C. Stebbins wrote in his memoirs that in Dundee, Scotland, two clowns tried to make sport of the evangelists, Moody and Sankey meetings then in process. "I feel Moody tonight," one clown said, and the other retorted, "Well, I feel Sankeymonious." The audience did not laugh. Instead, it rose to a man and burst into the hymn "Hold the fort for I am coming."

It is easy for us to say what a rotten lot the mockers were, a shame to Judaism and the whole Jewish religion, and then go away and say that we are not like that, and we would never do that. But this sin is so common amongst us Christians that we never think of it as a sin and I am sure that we have done it plenty of times. My past came back to haunt me as I thought about it, and I confess that I was just like those men who mocked Jesus.

I mocked Christ, and I was cruel towards people by what I said about them. To be honest I cared not for man and even less for God. I once openly mocked God, I said, "if you are there, strike me down", but He ignored a fool. I enjoyed mocking people, and even when I supposedly knew Jesus, I still mocked, sometimes it was the children in our congregations, sometimes it was the adults. It was something that I saw others do as a child and it continued with me. I still have a lot of things to work on in my life and that is one of them.

It is easy for us as believers to point the finger at those outside the church who mock God. But the most subtle mockery of God, and the most dangerous, comes from those of us sitting in the assembly. We are guilty of mockery when we behave



with an outward show of spirituality or godliness without an inward engagement or change of heart. We mock God when we say we love Him but do not obey Him.

What is all this dressing up in the churches, wearing robes, collars, hats and crucifixes, but an attempt to portray a religion that God did not make and we caricature Him. The people who wear all these religious “uniforms” are not all doing it with malicious intent, they may be doing it in ignorance, but they are doing it and making it acceptable. Thereby men disguise Jesus, and the simple Gospel. I hear you saying, “what if they do it sincerely, with a pure heart? I question the pure heart, because if it were pure, the people would question where the practice came from and immediately see it was not of Christ.

But what if they do it in ignorance? I grant that it might be done in ignorance, but if it is, the person knows little of Jesus, little of the practices of the Apostles, what on earth is he doing, because he should not be in any position in the church until he knows what the Church should do. We all adopt behaviours and practices, sometimes or often times, being misled by people who should know better, and we are unwittingly making a mockery of God and His religion.

Perhaps we should approach the subject of Christianity as if we were dealing with a person who has had no knowledge of the subject, an alien to religion and the person of Christ. How would we put across the faith, what would we teach and what would we dismiss as totally unnecessary?

Jesus knew that mockery of His position would come, indeed it was written, but that did not make it right, *Psa 22:6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. Psa 22:7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, Psa 22:8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

The mocking of Jesus was not for correction, because it was for humiliation. It inflicted upon the Saviour pain and suffering, with no other point than to satisfy the evil natures of His tormenters. Why do we mock others? There are a number of reasons, the most pertinent of them are as follows, and I am grateful to Isabelle O'Gallagher for this information,

They are insecure about themselves. One of the most common reasons people mock others is because they are actually insecure about themselves. Maybe something came up in conversation that poked at that insecurity. Rather than face their insecurity and accept rather than being uncomfortable or ashamed, the person will resort to mocking others. This helps them feel like their insecurity is less noticeable. In some cases, it

might even help the person feel more self-assured and confident because they feel like they have the upper hand.

It helps the person feel superior. On the note of “dragging someone down,” an important reason why someone might mock others is because they are trying to make that person feel inferior. This is a very common trait seen amongst adults in the workplace or as a tactic used by narcissists. Because mockery is used to ridicule others, it can be very effective for establishing dominance. For these individuals, mocking others is a form of power they wield over people they see as “less than” to keep them in their place and make it clear that they are above the other person socially.

It’s an outright insult. In its most basic form, people mock others to insult them. There might be a series of underlying reasons relating to how they feel about themselves, but sometimes the motivation is simply to hurt someone. Whether they are attempting to incite a reaction from the other person varies. Sometimes it is purely done out of frustration and in response to what another person said. Regardless, when you mock someone, especially, to their face, it is a clear, visual way to disrespect them.

They’re jealous. When it comes to mockery, jealousy is often tied to insecurity. Oftentimes, someone will reveal something good in their life that makes the other person feel insecure and jealous about what they don’t have. They might even think you don’t deserve whatever it is. Instead of congratulating or supporting the positive things in that person’s life, mockery is used almost as a form of punishment to prevent them from enjoying what they have. Again, this could be connected to other reasons on this list, such as superiority, where the jealous person mocks someone to re-establish that they are better despite whatever they’re lacking.

Used for persuasion. This isn’t the most common reason compared to the others on the list, but it is an important one to keep in mind. When done by a charismatic person, mockery can be persuasive, especially if it is done at the expense of someone else. An example would be if a group of friends try to convince you to skip class and you respond by saying your parents would not approve. By mocking this remark about your parents, you might feel pressured or persuaded into joining them for the sake of your social reputation.

Mockery might not be the most positive behaviour, but there are logical reasons behind why many people do this to others. Unfortunately, most of these reasons stem from the individual having poor communication or coping skills or personality traits that make them feel as if they need to mock others to feel safe or superior.

It is a nasty human trait that says more about the mocker than the person being mocked. Have you observed that people don't mock Islam or its leaders? They seldom mock other religions, but they really do go for Christianity. Why is Christ held in such derision? This I think is another proof of the power of Christianity. Because it is true, the devil will do his uttermost to destroy, belittle, cast doubt upon, ridicule and mock this above all religions. You do not hear people using "satan" as a curse word but you hear continually "God" and "Jesus" used as curse words.

The men who mocked Jesus, did so because they could not make a serious case against Him, so the best that they could do to humiliate Jesus was to resort to mockery. It was their vengeance because they were little men going way out of their depth to try and convict an innocent man. They lied and bought false witnesses, they even paid a disciple to betray him, and the keepers of the law, the priests, the mouthpiece of God joined in. It always has been our way, to mock what we do not understand, *2Pe 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 2Pe 3:4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Are you one?

## **207. Pilate *Luke 23: 1 - 7***

*Luk 23:1 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. Luk 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. Luk 23:3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Luk 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. Luk 23:5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.*

*Luk 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. Luk 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.*

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What do we know about Pontius Pilate? He is introduced at the beginning of our Gospel as one of the rulers of the kingdom of Judea, and Luke fixes the time of this historical event by giving a list of the rulers. It is the only event fixed with accuracy and it is the beginning of the Kingdom of God, *Luk 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Luk 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

These rulers are the very people who will oppose the Gospel and crucify Christ, *Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

The World History Encyclopedia gives us some more details of this man,

Pontius Pilate was the fifth magistrate to serve in the Roman province of Judea, created in 6 A.D. by Roman emperor Augustus (r. 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.). His term of office was during the subsequent reign of Tiberius from 26-36 A.D. He became famous for the trial and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth (c. 30 A.D.).

#### Pilate's Life

We know very little of Pilate's background, but there is speculation that his name, Pontius, derived from the family name Pontii in Rome, of Plebeian descent. As a historical figure, we have evidence of contemporary literature, coins minted in his name, and an inscription from the base of what may have included his statue from the city of Caesarea. Our literary sources for Pilate include the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria (c. 20-50 A.D.), the accounts in the four gospels, and the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (36-100 A.D.).

Philo was part of a delegation sent to Caligula (r. 37-41 A.D.) when tensions arose in Alexandria between the Alexandrians and the Jewish community. Before he was assassinated, Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.) had granted the Jews permission to follow their ancestral customs and their religion and were therefore excused from participation in the Roman and imperial cults. The Alexandrians were attempting to make the Jews conform. Philo described Pilate as "a man of inflexible, stubborn, and cruel disposition" (On the Embassy to Gaius, 299-305). When Pontius Pilate took

office, he permitted the legions of Judea to set up portable shields which had inscriptions to honour the emperor. Some Jews saw this as a violation of their ban on images, appeared before Pilate in the amphitheatre in the city of Caesarea, threatened to revolt, and were willing to die in protest against the offence. Josephus related the same story, referring to the signa of the shields.

As a Roman magistrate, Pilate was duty-bound to maintain law and order in the province. Philo reported that Jewish officials sent a letter to Tiberius and Tiberius quickly wrote back, "reproaching and rebuking him a thousand times for his newfangled audacity and telling him to remove the shields at once and have them taken from the capital to the city of Caesarea ... to be dedicated in the Temple of Augustus. In this way both the honour of the Emperor and the traditional policy regarding Jerusalem were alike preserved" (ibid). Pilate backed down and removed the images.

Philo and Josephus both reported that Pilate took money from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct 50 miles long. When the crowds reacted in protest, [Pilate] made the soldiers mix with the mob, wearing civilian clothing over their armour, and with orders not to draw their swords but to use clubs on the obstreperous. He now gave the signal from the tribunal and the Jews were cudgelled, so that many died from the blows, and many as they fled were trampled to death by their friends. The fate of those who perished horrified the crowd into silence. (Josephus, *The Jewish War* 2:175-177)

For the writings of both Philo and Josephus, however, it is important to place this material in the historical context of events in the 1st century A.D. Between the decades of the 20s to the 60s A.D. Jewish-Gentile relations were deteriorating in some cities. A series of corrupt magistrates contributed to the eventual Great Jewish Revolt of 66 A.D. against Rome, led by a group known as the Zealots. Both writers depict Judaism in its most positive light by blaming any problems on corrupt magistrates.

You are left with the impression that Pilate is a rough soldier, unrefined, ready to do as he is bid to keep the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome, and he often keeps it with violence. Jesus has been summoned by the Jewish leaders and now he is sent to Pilate to confirm the sentence. The Roman government did not allow the Jewish leaders the authority to execute a criminal. The religious leaders therefore sent Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor over the region of Judea. The Jewish leaders had reason to expect a favourable result when they went to Pilate. Secular

history shows that he was a cruel, ruthless man, completely insensitive to the moral feelings of others. Surely, they thought, Pilate will put this Jesus to death.

The Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. This took place to fulfil what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

They were wrong in thinking that they could get Pilate entangled so easily in their web of intrigue, *Luk 23:1 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. Luk 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. Luk 23:3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.*

Rather than cave in to them straight away, Pilate talks to Jesus and almost seems willing to let Him go, *Mat 27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: Mat 27:2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.....Mat 27:11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. Mat 27:12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Mat 27:13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? Mat 27:14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.*

The priests were hoping for a quick decision against Jesus because they wanted to eat the Passover and they didn't want to be ceremonially defiled by the Romans, *Joh 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they **themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled**; but that they might eat the passover. Joh 18:29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? Joh 18:30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Joh 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: Joh 18:32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.*

I think that there was a bit of tension between the priests and the Romans and Pilate knew that the Jews were always squabbling about their Law and it was not something that he wanted to be involved in, and according to Luke, Pilate found the charge against Jesus without merit, *Luk 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. Luk 23:5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.*

When Pilate heard that Jesus came from Galilee, he had a way out of his dilemma, he would send him to Herod who had jurisdiction over the Galilee region, *Luk 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. Luk 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.* This concludes the first trial before Pilate.

It was clearly escalating into a criminal case that involved all of the country's leaders. It was no longer just a "slap on the wrist" and send Jesus away, it was about saving face for the Jewish leaders. It had become more than a disagreement about doctrine, it had become a disagreement between two authorities, Jesus and the Priests. The priests were in danger of losing face, having their position undermined and becoming an irrelevance. At this Passover time, with most of the practicing Jews descending on Jerusalem it was a question of the leaders of the people establishing their authority.

This background information from Encyclopaedia Britannica explains the political situation,

When Jesus was born, all of Jewish Palestine—as well as some of the neighbouring Gentile areas—was ruled by Rome's able "friend and ally" Herod the Great. For Rome, Palestine was important not in itself but because it lay between Syria and Egypt, two of Rome's most valuable possessions. Rome had legions in both countries but not in Palestine. Roman imperial policy required that Palestine be loyal and peaceful so that it did not undermine Rome's larger interests. That end was achieved for a long time by permitting Herod to remain king of Judaea (37–4 BC) and allowing him a free hand in governing his kingdom, as long as the requirements of stability and loyalty were met.

When Herod died shortly after Jesus' birth, his kingdom was divided into five parts. Most of the Gentile areas were separated from the Jewish areas, which were split between two of Herod's sons, Herod Archelaus, who received Judaea and Idumaea (as well as Samaria, which was non-

Jewish), and Herod Antipas, who received Galilee and Peraea. (In the New Testament, Antipas is somewhat confusingly called Herod, as in Luke 23:6-12; apparently the sons of Herod took his name, just as the successors of Julius Caesar were commonly called Caesar.) Both sons were given lesser titles than king: Archelaus was ethnarch, and Antipas was tetrarch.

The non-Jewish areas (except Samaria) were assigned to a third son, Philip, to Herod's sister Salome, or to the province of Syria. The emperor Augustus deposed the unsatisfactory Archelaus in 6 A.D. however, and transformed Judaea, Idumaea, and Samaria from a client kingdom into an "imperial province." Accordingly, he sent a prefect to govern this province. That minor Roman aristocrat (later called a procurator) was supported by a small Roman army of approximately 3,000 men. The soldiers, however, came not from Italy but from nearby Gentile cities, especially Caesarea and Sebaste; presumably, the officers were from Italy. During Jesus' public career, the Roman prefect was Pontius Pilate (ruled 26-36 A.D.).

Although nominally in charge of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea, the prefect did not govern his area directly. Instead, he relied on local leaders. The prefect and his small army lived in the predominantly Gentile city Caesarea, on the Mediterranean coast, about two days' march from Jerusalem. They came to Jerusalem only to ensure peace during the pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Weeks (Shabuoth), and Booths (Sukkoth)—when large crowds and patriotic themes sometimes combined to spark unrest or uprisings.

On a day-to-day basis Jerusalem was governed by the high priest. Assisted by a council, he had the difficult task of mediating between the remote Roman prefect and the local populace, which was hostile toward pagans and wanted to be free of foreign interference. His political responsibility was to maintain order and to see that tribute was paid. Caiaphas, the high priest during Jesus' adulthood, held the office from about 18 to 36 A.D. longer than anyone else during the Roman period, indicating that he was a successful and reliable diplomat. Since he and Pilate were in power together for 10 years, they must have collaborated successfully.

I think they collaborated but I do not think that they had much respect for each other. With only a limited army at his disposal, 3000 - 6000 men, Pilate had to consider what it took to keep the peace against a much larger population of Jews who could revolt at any time. Remember that when Titus came to crush the Jews at

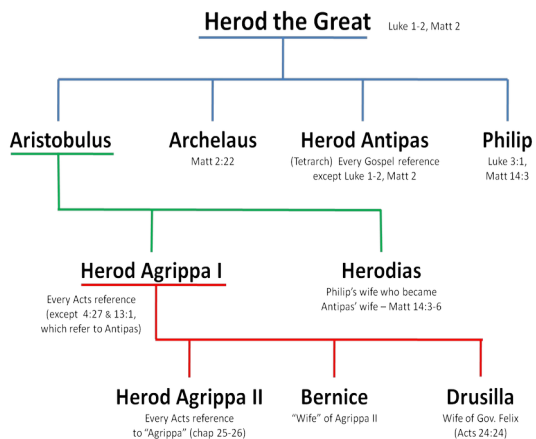


Jerusalem, some 40 years later he was given four legions totalling 60,000 troops. The army was supported by a force of 16,000 non-combatants responsible for supply and logistics. Pilate did not want the responsibility for a Jewish revolt on his head, and so he was relieved to send Jesus to Herod for his opinion.

Caiaphas was not wrong when he said, *Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, **that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.***

Both the Romans and the Jews would settle for that.

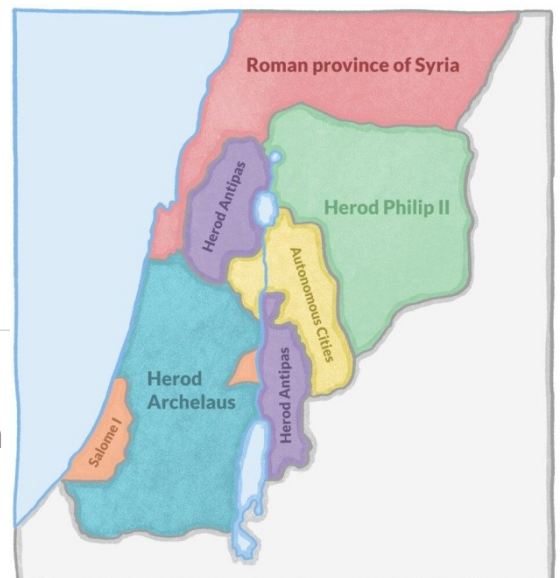
## 208. Herod *Luke 23: 7 - 12*



*Luk 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. Luk 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Luk 23:9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. Luk 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. Luk 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to*

*Pilate. Luk 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

There is often confusion over the name "Herod" and which one we are dealing with so just a reminder of who is who. *Luk 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and **Herod being tetrarch of Galilee**, and his brother **Philip***



**tetrarch of Ituraea** and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene.

When Herod the Great died shortly after Jesus' birth, his kingdom was divided into five parts. Most of the Gentile areas were separated from the Jewish areas, which were split between two of Herod's sons, **Herod Archelaus**, who received Judaea and Idumaea (as well as Samaria, which was non-Jewish), and **Herod Antipas**, who received Galilee and Peraea. (In the New Testament, Antipas is somewhat confusingly called Herod, as in Luke 23:6-12; apparently the sons of Herod took his name, just as the successors of Julius Caesar were commonly called Caesar.)

Both sons were given lesser titles than king: Archelaus was ethnarch, and Herod Antipas was tetrarch ("ruler of a quarter"). **Herod Antipas** (the same man who had previously ordered the death of John the Baptist) had wanted to see Jesus for a long time, hoping to observe one of the miracles of Jesus. **Herod Antipas is the one we shall look at.**

Herod's father was by descent an Edomite with a Jewish mother; his ancestors had converted to Judaism and Herod was raised as a Jew. I do not think he was a Jew by conviction only a Jew by convenience, and his lineage was not pure, as was Jesus'. Herod I, the Great (c. 72 B.C. – c. 4 A.D.), his father, was a Roman Jewish client king of the Herodian Kingdom of Judea. The Bible also records Herod Antipas as being a king, *Mar 6:14 And **king Herod** heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.* So we might say that Herod Antipas is also a king of the Jews.

We have it on record that John the Baptist challenged Herod about his relationship with his brother, Philip the Tetrarch's, wife, *Luk 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Luk 3:20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

In prison, the wife of Philip, Herodias, wanted John dead, a spiteful act of revenge, but Herod was afraid of John and liked to hear what he said, *Mar 6:19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: Mar 6:20 For **Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him;** and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

This doesn't seem to quite square with Matthew's account, *Mat 14:3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. Mat 14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to*

have her. *Mat 14:5 **And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.***

The seeming conflict between, *Mar 6:20 For **Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him**; and when he heard him, he did many things, and **heard him gladly**, and..... Mat 14:5 **And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet**,* might be resolved by considering when Mark and Matthew are writing their account.

Matthew could be writing from the time at which John uttered his condemnation of the illicit relationship, and the anger of Herodias and Herod was fresh, and all the hurt feelings flowed out of the pair. They wanted John punished by death and they would do it right away, but being a politician, he saw that the majority of people did not want a man they considered a prophet killed, *Mat 14:5 **And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.*** Mark picks up the story later on when Herod has calmed down, and he gets to know and respect John, *Mar 6:20 For **Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him**; and when he heard him, he did many things, and **heard him gladly**.*

But Herodias harboured a grudge and was on the lookout for an excuse to get back at John. I have suggested this event occurred in Galilee because he invited people from Galilee, "Herod gave a great birthday celebration for himself and invited his officials, his army officers, and the leaders of Galilee". Sometime earlier Herod Antipas had built the city of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, partly modelling it after a Greek city, but, though he erected statues in the Greek manner in his palace, his coins bore no images. He also encouraged the Herodians, well-to-do Jews who supported him and were tolerant of Roman authority.

*Mar 6:21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; Mar 6:22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. Mar 6:23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. Mar 6:24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. Mar 6:25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. Mar 6:26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. Mar 6:27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went*

*and beheaded him in the prison, Mar 6:28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. Mar 6:29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.*

Herod fulfilled the will and word of God concerning John, *Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.* And with that Herod snuffs out the life of the greatest of the OT prophets in a most terrible manner and so much for those who think they are entitled to an easy death. But in Herod's household there were those who did believe the Messiah, *Luk 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, Luk 8:3 And **Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward**, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.* John was gone but others readily took his place.

Herod not content with removing John, wanted also to get rid of Jesus, *Luk 13:31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. Luk 13:32 And he said unto them, **Go ye, and tell that fox**, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.* Jesus knew the character of Herod, and it was like a fox. I imagine that Aesop's fables were well known in the ancient world and the some 30 or so fables dealing with foxes were part of it.

Aesop's fables are the single most successful storytelling genre of ancient Greece and Rome. The fables were extremely popular in the ancient world, and approximately 600 Aesop's fables have been preserved from the ancient Greek and Latin sources. With the possible exception of the *New Testament*, no works written in Greek are more widespread and better known than Aesop's Fables. For at least 2500 years they have been teaching people of all ages and every social status lessons how to choose correct actions and the likely consequences of choosing incorrect actions. The tale of the "Sick Lion" highlights the cunning and wisdom of the fox,

A lion, no longer able from the weakness of old age to hunt for his prey, laid himself up in his den. Breathing with great difficulty and speaking with a low voice, the lion gave out that he was very ill indeed. The report soon spread among the beasts and there was great lamentation for the sick lion. One after the other came to see him. Catching him thus alone, and in his own den, the lion made an easy prey of them and grew fat upon his diet.

The fox, suspecting the truth of the matter, came at length to make his visit of inquiry and, standing at some distance, asked his Majesty how he

did. "Ah, my dearest friend," said the lion, "is it you? Why do you stand so far from me? Come, sweet friend, and pour a word of consolation in the poor lion's ear, who has but a short time to live." "Bless you!" said the fox, "but excuse me if I cannot stay. For, to tell the truth, I feel quite uneasy at the mark of the footsteps that I see here, all pointing towards your den, and none returning outwards." Moral: Affairs are easier of entrance than of exit and it is but common prudence to see our way out before we venture in.

Herod was cunning and resourceful and he had been getting in to the minds of the people such that the disciples are warned, *Mar 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.* Herod wanted to see Jesus but again there is a conflict in the statements, *Luk 13:31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for **Herod will kill thee**....and.....Luk 23:8 And **when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad**: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.* Was Herod glad to see Jesus or was he desirous of killing Him? It may point to a lie told by the Pharisees who said that Herod would kill Him, so as to get Jesus to move off in fear. It did not work.

When Jesus was taken from the priests, to the Romans and then to Herod, He is found not guilty of any charge against Him, *Luk 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no **fault in this man** touching those things whereof ye accuse him: Luk 23:15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, **nothing worthy of death is done unto him.***

As far as the Civil rulers were concerned, Jesus was innocent of all charges, by Roman and Jewish Civil statutes. It was a charge against Him, brought by the priests, a religious charge, that ultimately condemned Him.

That charge was that Jesus called Himself the Son of God, *Luk 22:70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. Luk 22:71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.* This was the religious charge against Jesus, but they had no power to put him to death, *Joh 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:***

The charge that He called Himself **THE** Son of God was enough, for in their Jewish minds, that was to make Himself as God, *Mat 26:63 But Jesus said nothing. Again*

*the high priest said to Jesus, "You are now under oath. I command you by the power of the living God to tell us the truth. **Tell us, are you the Messiah, the Son of God?**" Mat 26:64 Jesus answered, "Yes, that's right. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of God. And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven." Mat 26:65 When the high priest heard this, he tore his clothes in anger. He said, "This man has said things that insult God! We don't need any more witnesses. You all heard his insulting words. ETV.*

Let us be quite clear what the charge was, *Joh 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.* This was equivalent to making Himself equal with God, *Joh 5:18 Now the leaders wanted to kill Jesus for two reasons. First, he had broken the law of the Sabbath. But even worse, he had said that God was his Father, **which made him equal with God.** CEV.*

The Jewish leaders did not want anybody to be God, other than their version of god. In effect, they had put GOD on trial.

## **209. God on Trial *Luke 23: 13 -14***

*Luk 23:13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, **Luk 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people:** and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:*

Jesus was condemned because He said He was the Son of God, which made Him equal with God. Do you believe that? A lot of people say that they believe in Jesus and a whole lot more believe in a "god", but what is the difference between "god" as conceived by men and the "god" conceived by the elders of the people, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the chief priests and the scribes? I will say emphatically and in the main, NOTHING. Their concept of "god" is no different, because it is not based upon any Scriptures, it is only based upon the conjecture of a sinful human heart.

When somebody says, "I do not believe in a God who would let people suffer", they are making a statement which puts God outside of suffering, by not attributing it to Him, but it would raise a subsequent question, "who then causes the suffering?" But where would you get such an idea that God doesn't cause suffering? The Bible

which claims to be God's word, says that He does cause suffering, *Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?* If God takes ownership of this suffering why cannot man accept it?

This is where we come to the heart of the matter. Is your God the God of the Bible? Wait a minute, surely you are making a presumption that the Bible is true? You have to prove that it is true before you too make that assumption. We take the Scripture as our authority because it is written, *2Ti 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 2Ti 3:15 **And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***

That says two things. Scriptures make you wise to salvation in Jesus, from your youth and upwards. And that it profits you for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, because it comes from God breathing out His word. The word incorrectly rendered by the KJV as "given by the inspiration of God" is one word in the Greek, θεόπνευστος = theopneustos, God breathed. It is not inspired, it is expired, just as it says, *Deu 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, **but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.***

If you do not believe that, I am sorry for you, and that is an end to our discussion, because you reject the evidence of Scripture, and we have no common ground upon which we may discuss the nature of God. We shake the dust off of our feet, for we are not on common ground. Remember this when you are talking to the fool, *Psa 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.* The person who rejects God is a corrupt fool, and the person who rejects the knowledge of God will be destroyed, *Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

For those who have not switched off to Scripture, there is in the Bible a revelation of God from the Creation, *Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made*

*that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* That says that the “Word”, who is a purposeful being and not an unfathomable being, a logical being and not random force, created all life, by just speaking it into existence. We are told that the ordered “Word” gave enlightenment to mankind, and we see the “Word” was Jesus, the Messiah, God with us, the incarnate Deity. Jesus made the worlds, ***Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.***

In the Scripture it gives the rules for serving God, *Exo 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Exo 20:3 (1) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Exo 20:4 (2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; Exo 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Exo 20:7 (3) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

1. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” ...
2. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” ...
3. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” ...

The exclusivity of Jehovah over all things is stated succinctly in these words. Why should we accept this? Because He told us through His Son, and He is the ONLY person to come back from the dead and tell us about the experience, He is the ONLY one with the knowledge of life, *Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? Joh 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. Joh 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Other religious leaders spent their lives either searching for a meaning to life or recording what they thought was right about God, with no absolute proof. ONLY one person in history makes the claim to have died and raised Himself from the dead, Jesus, and in that unique position, He speaks to us, *Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;** Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of*



*his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

The Jews were well aware that the Messiah would come, even the Samaritans knew, *Joh 4:25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Joh 4:26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.* So why did the Jews reject Jesus, and why did they reject the God of Jesus, and why ultimately did they kill God?

They killed God, because God intruded on their comfortable lives and man-made religion. You will find in many of the cults and religions of our day that they hold opinions which do not square with the Scripture. These teachings ultimately create another “god”, different from the God of the Scripture, and it has the effect of distorting and ultimately killing the image of God, such that God is dead. The German philosopher Nietzsche put it well when he realised that another type of religion, science, had killed the idea of God,

Nietzsche was an atheist for his adult life and so he didn’t mean that there was a God who had actually died, but rather that our idea of one had. After the Enlightenment, the idea of a universe that was governed by physical laws and not by divine providence had become mainstream. Philosophy had shown that governments no longer needed to be organized around the idea of divine right to be legitimate, but rather by the consent or rationality of the governed — that large and consistent moral theories could exist without reference to God.

This was a tremendous event. Europe no longer needed God as the source for all morality, value, or order in the universe; philosophy and science were capable of doing that for us. This increasing secularization of thought in the West led the philosopher to realize that not only was God dead but also that human beings had killed him with their scientific revolution, their desire to better understand the world.

The death of God didn’t strike Nietzsche as an entirely good thing. Without a God, the basic belief system of Western Europe was in jeopardy, as he put it in *Twilight of the Idols*: “When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one’s feet. This morality is by no means self-evident... Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole.”

The only problem that this view had was that it entirely left **sin** out of the equation. Man cannot think or reason correctly because of sin, and in consequence he is predisposed towards evil, *1Co 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1Co 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.* The so called "rationality of the governed" is an illusion according to Paul, and to think men are capable of sane government is proven to be false by the outcomes of history, with Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, Pol Pott, Putin, Boris Johnson, Trump, Biden, and the increasingly woke nature of thought as we spiral into the abyss.

The reason Jesus came was this, *Mat 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* But the people who did not want Him, and the people who **do** not want Him, are comfortable in their sins. With their distorted view of reality, with their irrational nature, they will do everything in their power, and with the devils' help, to fight against God. They will try to kill Him, because they want Him dead. No God, no morality, as Nietzsche said, "When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet. This morality is by no means self-evident... Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole."

The worst manifestation of this faithlessness is seen in the modern churches, in people which pay lip service to God but whose heart is far from Him. *Mar 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Mar 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* It is my belief that these so called "Christians" would join the baying mob to kill Jesus for the same reason. They do not want Him to reign over them. They do not, in truth, want Him as Lord of their lives. They do not hold His words as sacred, but they hold to their own views.

These people go to churches but they do not have the slightest interest in the Scriptures, what God has said about so many things that guide us on our way, *Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* They do not open their Bible from one week to the next, but rely on someone else's words to guide them, because they are lazy, and do not heed the warnings because they do not look, and so they are appointed to death, *1Pe 2:8 And a stone of stumbling,*

*and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

I will show you how alien the modern churches are to God. Try and find in the purpose built buildings, steeple houses as Fox called them, with their altars or tables, pulpits, the stained glass, the religious architecture and trinketry gathered together for worship, the men dressing up in women's clothes, collars and titles invented by men, bells and cymbals, pews facing one way, the men who are deemed by men fit for teaching and not called by God, where are they in the Scripture of the NT. They do not exist, and they are a figment of imaginative minds, and by this we are led into the realm of a fairy tale, a string of lies, and told this is the way to worship God. It is a fantasy worship from which we should awake.

But like us, the people of Jesus day, *Rom 11:8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.* So God is executed by the very people who should know better, but in reality they do not because they cannot see and cannot hear His words.

The proof that people do not want God as He reveals Himself can be quite clearly seen in the way they refuse to question what they are doing, or if they question it, refuse to do what God has said. Too often we are encouraged to prop up this falsehood, by considering those people as weak Christians, instead of seeing them as being very strong and stubborn people who refuse God's way.

Jesus has shown us what man will try to do with God, if only he can get control of God, *Act 4:26 The kings of earth prepare for war, and the rulers join together against the Lord and his Messiah.*" CEV. It wasn't just one man's opinion, it was a universal condemnation of God. This has been going on since time began, as Stephen said, *Act 7:51 You stubborn and hardheaded people! You are always fighting against the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors did. Act 7:52 Is there one prophet that your ancestors didn't mistreat? They killed the prophets who told about the coming of the One Who Obeys God. And now you have turned against him and killed him. Act 7:53 Angels gave you God's Law, but you still don't obey it.*

Time is running out for each and every one of us, who shall suffer the same fate as those God killers of Jesus day, *Psa 2:11 Serve Jehovah with fear; yea, rejoice with trembling. Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Oh the blessings of all those who flee to Him for refuge!* LITV.

## 210. No Fault *Luke 23: 12 - 17*

*Luk 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves. Luk 23:13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Luk 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: Luk 23:15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. Luk 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him. Luk 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)*

There is one person who we do not often mention, who had a testimony to give at the trial and crucifixion of Christ, *Mat 27:17 Then they, having been assembled, Pilate said to them, Whom do you wish I may release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus being called Christ? Mat 27:18 For he knew they delivered Him up through envy. Mat 27:19 But as he was sitting on the judgment seat, **his wife sent to him, saying, Let nothing be to you and that just one. For I have suffered many things today by a dream because of Him.*** While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, **his wife** sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.'

This is a remarkable testimony of a wife, giving her supernatural testimony of Jesus. Pilate's wife does not appear by name in the Bible but the Gospel of Nicodemus, an Apocryphal book, it identifies her as Claudia Procula, granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus. According to texts outside the Bible, she was highly influenced by the Jewish faith and was possibly a convert to Judaism. Pilate's wife was **a gentile** woman, wife to a Roman leader and granddaughter to a Roman emperor yet, she was the only one to come forth and speak on Jesus' behalf while He stood trial.



John's Gospel does not mention Pilate's wife, but he does record a personal conversation with Jesus, *Joh 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Joh 18:34 Jesus*

*answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Joh 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Joh 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

An imperial regulation said provincial governors had been prohibited from taking their wives with them. But the rule gradually fell into disuse, and an attempt made in the Senate (A.D. 21) to revive it completely failed (*Carr*). This gentile woman had a visit from God and spoke God's words, *Num 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.*

The Sermon Bible makes this observation,

It may occur to us as in some respects singular that this vision was to Pilate's wife, and not to Pilate himself. Why was there this indirect communication? We can only say, that this would greatly depend on points in Pilate's character with which we have not full acquaintance, and that we are bound to conclude that God took the course which was best adapted, on the whole, to the circumstances of the case. As the supernatural message came through Pilate's wife, there may have been furnished a double motive to the governor; in addition to obedience to the vision, there may have been the desire of pleasing the person to whom it had been granted. The attachment of Pilate to his wife may have been great; and on such a supposition, the terrors of the vision would have been more effective upon Pilate as conveyed to him through the tears and entreaties of her whom he loved, (rather) than had they burst upon him in their unearthliness, with all the demonstrations of superhuman agency.

What prompted this conversation? Was it this woman's dream that caused her husband to pause? She alone is the only one person spoke up for Jesus and you will note, not one of Jesus' disciples did as much as Pilates wife. "Pilate's wife sensed her solemn responsibility and made her plea, even though her husband, who was also convinced of Christ's innocence, ultimately delivered Him to be crucified." Did she sense the ancient Eve in her that this was the true deliverer of mankind?

Origen, one of the Greek Fathers of the Church, taught that Procula Claudia became a Christian after the Resurrection because of that dream, but that is a tradition. While Jesus is hanging on the cross, at about the ninth hour, Dorothy Sayers, in her novel, "A man born to be King" includes a scene in which Pilate asks Claudia to describe the dream that troubled her so. She tells him that she was on a ship and that she heard a cry; the skies became dark and the Aegean rough. The captain of the ship tells her that "Great Pan is dead." She asks the captain, "How can God die?" and he replies, "Don't you remember? They crucified him. He suffered under Pontius Pilate." Then Claudia heard a chorus of voices repeating the words of the Apostles Creed: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate" and "crucified, dead, and buried" with her husband's name repeated in different languages. It seems like a bad omen to both of them that Pilate's name is so connected with this one judgment, remembered through the ages. But despite this speculation and trying to make sense of it, it remains speculation.

If we are to look anywhere for a meaning in his wife speaking against Jesus crucifixion, it may be found in the lesson learned by the daughters of Eve. She was no longer prepared to take a bite out of Christ and warns her husband not to either, but her warning went unheeded. Perhaps this is why the Gospel describes the dream of Pilate's wife as being so troubling, for in it she witnesses in a dramatic way the full effect of Pilate's role in the trial of Jesus of Nazareth.

From what we know historically about Pilate we would not predict his hesitation at the execution of a Jew. He profoundly and outspokenly hated them, but Pilate, a brutal leader, expressed compassion on Christ. Only God knows whether he was entangled in envy and authority, or possibly experiencing the very presence of God. Could it be possible these two outsiders recognized Jesus more than the Jewish people who were supposed to know unequivocally who He was? The death and resurrection of Christ left a historical footprint in time and permanent freedom from sin for all those who embrace Jesus as Saviour.

Yet he still has the cruelty of a Roman, and Jesus goes back to Pilate for sentencing, and hearing Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, who sent him back to Pilate donning a purple robe in mockery. Pilate eventually bowed to the demands of the people, ordering Jesus to be scourged. "This scourging was usually inflicted by lictors,"

Like many of our words and phrases, the origin is in the Latin or Greek. In this case, it is the Latin. Although traced to ancient Rome, they actually took it from the Etruscans (700 B.C.). The word "licks" as in "get your licks in" refers to being beaten with rods that were carried and administered by the "lictors". To be given a

good licking. The word “Lictor” literally means “rod bearers, “but as Pilate was only a procurator he had no lictor, and hence his soldiers inflicted this terrible punishment.”

In Pilates mind, he had obtained peace with Herod, and they had been united over this one person, Jesus, *Luk 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.* Both Pilate and Herod at last found agreement, and Jesus was not guilty of the malicious claims of the Jews, *Luk 23:13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Luk 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, **having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man** touching those things whereof ye accuse him: Luk 23:15 **No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.***

What was it then that made Pilate to go on and have Jesus put to death even though he found him not guilty? What had turned the people from “Hosanna”, Lord deliver us, to “Crucify Him” in six days? What had Jesus said to these people that changed their mind about Him? I have no doubt that Pilate was swayed by the people to crucify Jesus, and he washed his hands of the whole matter, *Mat 27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. Mat 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Mat 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.....Mar 15:15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.* Pilate contented the people, not justice and so he was a people pleaser. You may consider why didn’t Jesus not stay in Jerusalem and let the Galilean Jews come to Him at Passover instead of going from town to town in Galilee. He could have expended a lot less energy by doing this, by waiting for them at the three compulsory feasts of the Jews. Two reasons spring to mind. By not using Jerusalem as a base, Jesus was distancing Himself from the priests and the Pharisees. His teaching was separate from theirs. Also, the people from Galilee would have had time to count the cost of discipleship, thinking about what they hear in a non-religious environment.

The message of Jesus had been generally encouraging up to the time Jesus came into Jerusalem, preparing the people for the Kingdom, sending out His disciples to preach the Gospel, healing the sick and doing miracles, but as He enters and the Temple looms before Him, it seems to change the whole tenor of His ministry. The last miracle that Jesus performs is the healing of Malchus ear, but before that entry

into Jerusalem, it was Lazarus raised from the dead, and that is the end of Jesus signs and wonders.

The Temple, the focus of Judaism, concentrates as it were, Jesus' ministry, to consider just what the core facts were, and apply them as a warning to all men. Signs and wonders would no longer be used to show Jesus authority, it was strictly the Word of God, and if they would not hear it, so be it. The gateway to the Kingdom is narrowing with every advance He makes towards the cross, and unless He gets the changes He requires, the people will not be coming with Him as He departs this life on His Heavenly Exodus.

The events that Jesus goes through are as follows, according to Luke,

1. The entry into Jerusalem
2. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem
3. Jesus cleanses the Temple
4. Jesus authority challenged by the priests and scribes
5. The parable of the wicked tenants given to the people
6. The priests and scribes question Jesus on payment of taxes in order to trap Jesus
7. The Sadducees question Jesus about the resurrection
8. Jesus declares Himself the son of David, that is Adonai
9. He gives a warning against the scribes
10. He watches the widows offering as a true sacrifice
11. He prophesies an apocalypse,
  - a. The destruction of the Temple
  - b. The destruction of Jerusalem
  - c. The coming of the son of man
  - d. The lesson of the fig tree and they ought to be on watch

This series of conflicts ends with an apocalyptic message to the Jews, and the final words are about the attitudes of all of these groups of people. *Luk 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him. Luk 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)* It wasn't Jesus that the people wanted, it was a murderer, and that sums up the human race.

## **211. Barabbas *Luke 23: 18 - 25***

*Luk 23:18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: Luk 23:19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for*



murder, was cast into prison.) Luk 23:20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. Luk 23:21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Luk 23:22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. Luk 23:23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. Luk 23:24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. Luk 23:25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Barabbas, Luk 23:19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison), is the alternative choice to be given to the people for release. He is the scapegoat, **זִזְיָאזֶל** = azazel, to be set free. It comes from **זִי** a goat and **אָזַל** to go away, disappear, so properly, it is the **disappearing goat**. Luk 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

This however, happens on the **Day of Atonement**, Lev 16:7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Lev 16:8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. Lev 16:9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. Lev 16:10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness..... Lev 16:15 Then shall he kill **the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people**, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: ..... Lev 16:21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and **confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:** Lev 16:22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

This ritual served to illustrate that there are two aspects to do with sin. Firstly the offering of a life for sin and, secondly, the removal of the memory of sins themselves, far from the presence of the Lord. Of course I remind you that in the OT, this was done every year, because the earthly sacrifice was not good enough, Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. Heb 10:3 **But in those sacrifices there is a**

**remembrance again made of sins every year.** Heb 10:4 *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Although Barabbas, “Son of the Father, was a convicted murderer, this Jewish custom, made the crime disappear, like the goat in the wilderness. So one can see how the festival of the Passover is married with the Day of Atonement. It may also be that the Feast of Tabernacles is brought into view also, at the entry into Jerusalem, *Joh 12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Joh 12:13* **Took branches of palm trees**, and went forth to meet him, and cried, *Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.* The palm tree is not a symbol of victory in the Bible, but it was used for making a temporary dwelling when the people came out of Egypt, at a place called Succoth, booths or tabernacles.

*Lev 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. Lev 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, **branches of palm trees**, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; **and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.** Lev 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Lev 23:42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: Lev 23:43 **That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*** They were a sign of the Exodus. So you have The Passover, The Atonement and Tabernacles, all brought together in the death of Jesus.

There is also another point which may be controversial, and that is, was Pontius Pilate taking the role of the High Priest, pronouncing death to Jesus and freedom to Barabbas? Was this gentile fulfilling the role that the Jews could not, because the priests wanted nothing to do with Jesus? *Mat 27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Mat 27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. Mat 27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. Mat 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, **he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person:** see ye to it. Mat 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.*

The washing of hands was done by the High Priest before going into the Tabernacle, *Exo 40:31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: Exo 40:32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. Exo 40:33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.* It is just another thought for us to consider in the wealth of meaning of this seminal event.

Pilate tries to free Jesus three times without success, so can we really find him guilty of Jesus death? The Scripture says, *Act 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Act 4:28 For **to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*** The Scripture does not lay the responsibility on one person but it does say, “**to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**” It doesn’t say who is guilty but it does say God’s will was done.

In his defence, Pilate was in the position of the man in Romans chapter 7, *Rom 7:15 I do not understand what I do; for **I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate.** Rom 7:16 Since what I do is what I don't want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. Rom 7:17 **So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me.** Rom 7:18 I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. Rom 7:19 I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do.* GNB. Yes, it was the sin which compelled him to do it.

Pilate is betwixt and between, knowing what to do but being unable to do it, and so he commits the evil deed because his nature is evil. Herod too could find no reason against Jesus but he too was swept up in the circumstances and put his name to whatever the people would do. The priests and the people, goading one another on, cried “crucify Him, crucify Him”. The people, who had shouted loud Hosannas to the King, now wanted Him dead.

So who is responsible for the death of Jesus? **You are and I am.** We can spend all day over the question of Pilate’s guilt and by this overlook our own guilt. If we say we are not guilty of His death because we had nothing to do with it, we neglect our own sin, *1Ti 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*** We are self

righteous fools who are prepared to sit in judgement of another, but take no responsibility for our own sins.

As Don Stewart says, "The death of Jesus was a horrible crime. Blame can be rightly placed upon the Jewish religious leaders as well as Pontius Pilate. However the blame has to be ultimately placed on the entire human race. It was for our sins that Jesus went to his death on Calvary's cross. Therefore all of us were responsible for his death."

The death of Jesus for us does something unusual. It brings the earthly Temple and the heavenly Temple into conjunction, *Heb 9:21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. Heb 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb 9:23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Heb 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

If you thought that sin was dealt with on earth and no sin existed in heaven, these verses contradict you. If you say no sin exists in the presence of God, then take a look at the pre-ambles to Job, *Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* The Septuagint has the "angels" of God not the sons of God.

What is that foul beast, the accuser of mankind, doing in the presence of God and the angels? The evil one, at that time, has access to God and why not? The OT saints, whose sins are not cleansed with the blood of bulls and goats, *Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,* are in heaven, *Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;.....Gen 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him..... Mat 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. Mat 17:3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

God is the God of the living, and the OT saints live, *Mar 12:26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the*

*God of Jacob? Mar 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err. They are alive in the presence of God **during the OT.***

It seems to me that nothing is violated by them going to heaven in the OT, without the forgiveness of sin, seeing that those souls had looked to God for their justification or righteousness, *Gen 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. Gen 15:6 **And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*** Abraham on this and other occasions was declared righteous, and every time he believed God, he was declared righteous. And this is the argument of Paul in Romans chapter 4, for our righteousness as Christians also, showing there is no difference between us in the NT and them in the OT, *Rom 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Rom 4:23 **Now it was not written for his sake alone,** that it was imputed to him; Rom 4:24 **But for us also,** to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;*

So the righteous, the saints of the OT, were gathered to God before the crucifixion, and the merits of the death of Christ were applied to them later, after, cleansing them in heaven. And in this we see that God had made a suitable framework of worship for us on earth, mirroring what He was doing in the realm of heaven. The Tabernacle was revealed as the place of God's dwelling on earth, being a mirror of His dwelling in heaven. The only thing that goes to heaven from this reality, is the soul of man, and it is cleansed by Christ and ultimately, all else is destroyed and a New Heaven is revealed, *Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

So in His atoning death, Christ opens the Kingdom fully, cleansing all of the OT saints, *Heb 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: Heb 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.....2Pe 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 2Pe 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

The necessity of the death of Christ for the sins of man, to cleanse and redeem those who will come to him, was all part of God's plan, set forth at the beginning, *Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* At the right time Christ came down to earth and opened the way to heaven in a new

Exodus, and when He has finished His purpose in Christ, *1Co 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1Co 15:27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 1Co 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

We are the principle actors on the stage of life, we killed Jesus and we were redeemed by Him. When you consider the world stood in opposition to him, hated Him and spat upon Him, you might wonder why He bothered to save anyone. But that is the measure of His sacrifice and love, *Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Can we refuse anyone, think that some are unworthy of being saved, and still claim to be a disciple of Christ? No we cannot.

*Luk 23:23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. Luk 23:24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. Luk 23:25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.*

The people who killed Jesus were the very people He came to save.

## 212. The Road to the Cross *Luke 23: 26 - 31*

*Luk 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. Luk 23:27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. Luk 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. Luk 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Luk 23:30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. Luk 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*



Jesus is led to the place of crucifixion and is helped by a Cyrenian, *Mar 15:21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.* Cyrene is in Libya, North Africa, about 850 miles by sea to Caesarea Maritime, on the coast of Israel. Caesarea is then connected to Jerusalem by a road the Romans used regularly as they were not based in Jerusalem. We presume that Simon of Cyrene was a Jew and on pilgrimage to the feast of the Passover when he is requisitioned to carry the cross. There is nothing to say he was black, white or any shade in between.

People from Cyrene were among the first Christian believers at the Day of Pentecost, *Act 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Act 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Act 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes.* Some believers from Cyrene fled Jerusalem following the death of Stephen (Acts 7) and began sharing their faith in Antioch, *Act 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

The Scripture says of Simon of Cyrenia, who was commanded to carry the cross of Jesus, *“that he might bear it after Jesus”*. He bore the same cross as Jesus, *Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* You hear people say that they have a cross to bear, and it may be an illness, someone wayward in the family, a disability, an uncommon hardship, the consequences of a sin, something that they think is a trial to them. All manner of things that are hardships are considered personal “crosses”.

What was Jesus cross? I do not think it was any of those complaints, no, none of these things, they are par for the course of life, *Php 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,* and the alternative is to live a life of misery. We have to put up with those inconveniences in a sinful world, for this time, and it is natural for the course of our lives. It is absurd to relate the trials and tribulations of this life, which we are to blame for in a world of suffering, which God gave to man because of his sin, and compare it with the crucifixion of Christ. It is even blasphemy.

We should have empathy with all human problems as Christians, but to elevate what we suffer to be equal to Christ's suffering is wrong, *Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast*

*hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; Gen 3:19 **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;** for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Two other men were killed with Jesus on that day, and they were both carrying crosses, made of the same material as His, but they were carrying them for a different reason, as one of them said, *Luk 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* We shall be punished for our sin, also the halt, the lame, the poor and the blind, as well as the healthy and the rich and the rulers, all shall be punished for their sins, all will be crucified for their rejection of Christ, and no amount of pleading that you bore a cross in this world for your suffering, will get you any sympathy with God. You did not bear your cross for the righteousness of Christ, you bore it for your sin.

Why was Jesus bearing a cross? Jesus, in bearing the instrument of His own death, the cross, was to be put to death for His testimony to the righteousness of God and as a result of His conviction, he was bearing His cross. Simon bore the same cross and is an example to all of us, to bear the reproaches of Christ, *Rom 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, **The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.....****Psa 69:9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and **the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.***

The Scripture says, “them that reproached thee”, likewise the people who carry the cross, carry the reproaches of Christ who is God, *Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Heb 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, **bearing his reproach.*** *Heb 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

Were the people who “*bewailed and lamented him*” sincere in their cries? Only moments before they had clamoured for His execution, *Mat 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Mat 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified,* whereas now, they seem to be mourning for Him, *Luk 23:27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.* I suggest that these people were professional mourners, possibly paid for by Pilate’s wife and that is why the Romans let the



mourners cry, because they would not allow them normally to mourn for criminals, as Dr Gill observes,

Yet public mourning was not allowed for persons that were executed as malefactors; and therefore it is the more remarkable, that here, and in Luk 23:48 any public tokens of sorrow should be expressed: for, "those that are executed by the sanhedrim.

Jeremiah laments for the waywardness of his people in a similar manner, *Jer 9:13 And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; Jer 9:14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: Jer 9:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. Jer 9:16 I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them. Jer 9:17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and **call for the mourning women**, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come: Jer 9:18 And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. Jer 9:19 For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out. Jer 9:20 **Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation. Jer 9:21 For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.***

Jesus turns to these mourners and rebukes them, *Luk 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. Luk 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, **Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.** Luk 23:30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, **Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*** He says that their weeping is in vain and that they should turn their tears upon themselves. The Jerusalemites just do not get it, they think that this death of someone that they consider a criminal, will pass and they will go on forever with their lives as if nothing changes. Foolish people.

It was foretold in the book of Hoseah, *Hos 10:8 The high places also of Aven (idols), the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, **Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on***

***us. Hos 10:9 O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.***

They shall chant, “*Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck*”, because those people are the happy people that will have no children, and that they should not see the suffering of their young ones. It was like Paul’s warning for “the present distress”, *1Co 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 1Co 7:26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. 1Co 7:27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 1Co 7:28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

Or as another version puts it, *1Co 7:26 We are now going through hard times, and I think it is best for you to stay as you are.* CEV. Paul did not think marriage was bad and should be abolished, that would lead to a “celibate clergy”, which is Paul denies in 1 Timothy chapter 3. It was something peculiar to the times that made him warn of it. Josephus relates of similar times,

“that when Titus had so closely encompassed the city with a wall, that there was no coming out for provisions, upon which a sore famine commenced, so that they fed on dung and dirt, and shoes, and girdles, one rich and noble woman, whose name was Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, being stripped of all she had, by the seditious, killed her own child, and dressed it, and ate part of it; and the other part being found by the soldiers that broke in upon her, the news of this shocking fact was spread all over the city, and everyone looked with horror upon it, and with the same compassion, as if they had done it themselves: and then might those words be said, “blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare”, who, though starving themselves, were under no temptation to do such a detestable action.”

Jerusalem would fall, and would not rise again as the centre of Jewish religion, although it should be built many times in years to come, just to satisfy man’s arrogant control over what he thinks religion should be, rather than what it is. It is a good question to ask anyone who says that they worship God. That is, “**show me in the scripture where God approves of your worship, the building, the men, the method of worship?**” Not in the Scripture? Well, how do you know that God accepts what you offer Him? You are by this, a law unto yourself, pulling down any

thought that you have and sanctifying it, and then assuming that it is God who speak to you. I don't believe that it is God who speaks to most people, it is the devil.

As Jesus said, *Luk 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If man does the awful crime of crucifying Jesus when they are just a young tree, what will they aspire to when they are a fully grown tree? As John reminds us, the road to the cross is a common path for the Christian, *Joh 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that **whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.** Joh 16:3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

### 213. Crucifixion *Luke 23: 32 - 34*

*Luk 23:32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. Luk 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Luk 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

And so we come to the place where our faith meets God, and our crimes which are many, are laid solemnly at His feet, and in pain and suffering, He lifts up our sins upon His shoulders and says to us, neither do I condemn you, go your way and sin no more. Have you been to the cross, I mean in your mind, and have you asked Jesus to forgive you? What is His answer? If He does not answer you, are you forgiven and if He does answer you, how does He do it? If it is not in accord with scripture, have you just imagined it? We will come to that question.

Jesus and the “evil doers” are brought to a place called Calvary which is the Latin for the Greek κρανίον or skull. It was called this from the skulls of executed persons that lay about. It is a tradition of the ancients that Adam was buried in this place where Christ was crucified, and that his skull lay here. Gill. It is also called Golgotha which is the Aramaic for skull, *Mat 27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. Mat 27:33 And when they were come unto a place called **Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull.*** The pattern of the crucifixion was Jesus in the middle and the criminals on either side.

Jesus utters the words, “*Father, **forgive them;** for they know not what they do*”. The declaration of their need for forgiveness makes it clear that they were guilty,

despite their ignorance. The words are found only here in Luke 23:34. And as He looked down from the cross upon a scene that must have been distressing to Him, the Roman soldiers gambling for His clothing (John 19:23-24), the criminals on the crosses to either side of Him reviling Him (Matthew 27:44), the religious leaders mocking Him (Matthew 27:41-43), and the crowd blaspheming Him (Matthew 27:39). Surrounded by this most unworthy lot, Jesus prayed for them. "Father, forgive them" is a prayer of unmatched mercy and love.

"Father, forgive them," does not mean that everyone was forgiven, unilaterally, without repentance and faith. It does mean that Jesus was willing to forgive the unrepentant and forgiveness was the reason He was on the cross. It shows there was no animosity in His heart towards them and that they could still find repentance while they had the breath of life.

This is "Intercession from the cross", *Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made **intercession for the transgressors**.*

Jesus was humiliated by being stripped naked. The victims of crucifixion were exposed naked and put on public display while they were slowly tortured to death, so that they would serve as a spectacle and an example. While modern crucifixes usually depict Jesus wearing a loin cloth, this is much more for our benefit as modern people. Historically, crucifixion victims were given no way of preserving their modesty, and it would have even more significance for the Jews, *Lev 18:6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. Lev 18:7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Lev 18:8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.* The Jew would have been horrified by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards of covering and dress.

Perhaps the only thing worse than torture is to be tortured in front of your loved ones! John records that Jesus was crucified, in full view of his mother and friend John, *Joh 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, **behold thy son!*** He gets his mother to look away from this terrible sight of her son, battered, whipped, bruised and bleeding, to John, her new son. The horror of this sight cannot be fully imagined and no words can do justice to Jesus humiliation. Artists have tried, and Michelangelo seems to have captured the moment.

Michelangelo sculpted the nude Jesus at age 18, when he was living in

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the Basilica of Santo Spirito with the Augustine monks. After the death of Lorenzo de Medici, the monks hosted him and let Michelangelo acquire familiarity with human anatomy by studying the corpses from the church's hospital. To show his gratitude, Michelangelo carved this Crucifix for their high altar around 1492.



Many years later he would sculpt the Risen Christ out of marble. It is 6 feet 9 inches high, and it is housed at the church Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome. Michelangelo made a contract in June 1514 that he would make a sculpture of a standing, naked figure of Christ holding a cross, and that the sculpture would be completed within four years of the contract.

Michelangelo had a problem because the marble he started carving was defective and had a black streak in the area of the face. His patrons, Bernardo Cencio, Mario Scapucci, and Metello Vari de' Pocari, were wondering what happened when they hadn't heard for a while from Michelangelo. Michelangelo had stopped work on the "Risen Christ" due to the blemish in the marble, and he was working on another project, the San Lorenzo facade. Michelangelo felt grief because this project of the "Risen Christ" was delayed so he ordered a new marble block from Pisa which was to arrive on the first boat).



When the "Risen Christ" was finally finished in March 1521 A.D., it was transported to Rome and was installed at the left pillar of the choir in the church Santa Maria sopra Minerva, by Pietro Urbano, Michelangelo's assistant (Hughes, 1999). It turns out that Urbano did a finish to the feet, hands, nostrils, and beard of Christ that many friends of Michelangelo described as disastrous. Furthermore, later on in history, nail holes were pierced in Christ's hands, and Christ's genitalia were hidden behind a bronze loincloth.

Because people have changed this sculpture over time; many are disappointed with this work of art because it is presently different than the original work that Michelangelo made. The "Risen Christ" had no title

during Michelangelo's lifetime. This sculpture was given the name it has now, because Christ is standing like the traditional resurrected saviour, as seen in other similar works of art.

That shows how Christ is changed by men and time, and the further away we get, so the image of Christ almost imperceptively changes, and becomes almost unrecognisable but the only true image is given by His apostles. If you want to see the true Jesus, then go to their writings. Nakedness was not originally a shame, it was the state of Creation and it was declared good. It was the intervention of sin which drew their attention to their nakedness, and they hid their procreative organs so that symbolically, their seed could not look upon their sin and rebellion against God, *Gen 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.....Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.* Why do I mention Adam? Because he is compared to Jesus, *1Co 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.1Co 15:22 **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.***

The nakedness of Adam was the state of man in the first Creation and the nakedness of Jesus was the state of man in the new Creation, *1Co 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 1Co 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. **It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:** 1Co 15:44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.1Co 15:45 And so it is written, **The first man Adam** was made a living soul; **the last Adam** was made a quickening spirit. 1Co 15:46 *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 1Co 15:47 **The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 1Co 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.1Co 15:49 **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*******

Jesus went back and took the first Adams garments and cast them aside. He was made to be a sin offering but He had no sin, and therefore He had no need of covering any guilt, for He was guiltless. When sinful man crucified Jesus, they stripped Him of His clothes and presented Him to the world naked, and in their sinful minds an object of mockery, but they were unwittingly setting Him forth in that sinless, guiltless state, and showing it to the whole of Creation. The last Adam, Christ, had rolled back the reproaches of the first Adam and in that new spiritual, heavenly, state, and there is no shame, *Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men*

*once to die, but after this the judgment: Heb 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

So Job could also say, *Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

There was a dispute between B W Newton and J N Darby, the Plymouth brothers, in 1847, to which I will lend my twopence, and it is relevant to the death of Christ. A dispute had taken place, and one of the many that have plagued that denomination, and the cause of it was this,

“That the Lord Jesus at His birth and because born of woman, partook of certain consequences of the Fall, **mortality being one**, and because of this association by nature, He became an heir of death, born under the death penalty”.

Newton said that mortality was a consequence of the fall. So is the death which passed upon all men, the mortality of man, due to sin or could Adam have died in the state God made him, without sinning. Is the death spoken of in Genesis physical or spiritual? *Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Adam did not die physically in the day that he disobeyed God and so we must assume it was a spiritual death he died. That does not answer the question, “Was Adam mortal, before the Fall?”

Firstly, if Adam had, for example, taken a knife and sliced through one of his arteries, would he have bled to death or not? Reason says that the consequences of cutting an artery with no medical intervention will lead to a bleed out and consequently death. I do not think that Adam was out of the reach of death before the fall, but I do believe that if he had followed his father’s instructions, he would live, *Lev 18:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, **he shall live in them**: I am the LORD.*

In sinning Adam had forfeited the protection of God, *Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Secondly, Jesus was born of God not of man's seed, and the woman was the vessel that carried the seed. He was sinless because of this, and consequently those who are born in the first Adam die and those born again in the last Adam are a sinless people. Jesus was mortal by birth as a man, but Christ's mortality was not due to sin.

## 214. Save Yourself *Luke 23: 35 - 39*

*Luk 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. Luk 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, Luk 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. Luk 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Luk 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*

These verses show to me that satan was putting a voice to his words, a voice in the people who were crucifying Jesus. The great coward of the universe, the devil, who hides behind the feeble minded people and makes them say his words, and do his deeds but will not show himself openly, gets three groups of people to speak for him, *Luk 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; **let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God**.....Luk 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, Luk 23:37 And saying, **If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself**.....Luk 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, **If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.***

The rulers, the soldiers and the malefactors all tempt Jesus to **save Himself**. The devil has a well tried ways of getting to men, and that method relates to (i) the comfort of the individual, a man's property, and (ii) the self-preservation of the individual, saving himself. Take these two things away from a man and he will turn against God. These are the very things which form satan's attack on Job, seen in the two temptations of Job.

*Job 1:8 Then the LORD asked, "What do you think of my servant Job? No one on earth is like him—he is a truly good person, who respects me and refuses to do evil." Job 1:9 "Why shouldn't he respect you?" Satan remarked. Job 1:10 "You are like a wall protecting not only him, but his entire family and all his property. You make him successful in whatever he does, and his flocks and herds are everywhere.*



*Job 1:11 **Try taking away everything he owns, and he will curse you to your face.**" Job 1:12 The LORD replied, "All right, Satan, do what you want with anything that belongs to him, but don't harm Job." Then Satan left. CEV.*

*Job 2:3 Then the LORD asked, "What do you think of my servant Job? No one on earth is like him—he is a truly good person, who respects me and refuses to do evil. And he hasn't changed, even though you persuaded me to destroy him for no reason." Job 2:4 Satan answered, "There's no pain like your own. People will do anything to stay alive. Job 2:5 **Try striking Job's own body with pain, and he will curse you to your face.**" Job 2:6 "All right!" the LORD replied. "Make Job suffer as much as you want, but just don't kill him." CEV. Jesus was likewise tested, to be put to the test of unendurable pain, such that He could have said, "I give up" and no longer have been The Saviour, after all it was a voluntary compact He was under. The crowds urged Him to give up but He did not save Himself.*

Jesus was always being tempted to sin, and right at the beginning of His ministry He was tempted for 40 days, *Luk 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Luk 4:2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.* Luke says that, "**he afterward hungered**", and that was when satan tempted Him to use His power on Himself, and so He had endured 40 days of temptation, before these three temptations are mentioned. Here at the other end of His ministry, at the crucifixion, are the final temptations of Christ before He is taken to glory.

Temptation is something that will shadow our lives to the very end, as Cornelius van Til told a student, when asked, "Student: to Van Til in his 70's: "Dr. Van Til, isn't there a sense in which as you get older, sins that once bothered you no longer do so?" Van Til, answered energetically, "Young man, that is **incipient perfectionism**. The greatest battles I fight now are the same battles I fought as a student."

In a news article this week, the headline shouted, "The seven secrets to living to 100, according to the UK's centenarians and longevity experts". Secrets? The one thing you've got to realize is that life and physical health is on the decline, and whether you like it or not a few years here or there are meaningless, compared with the descent into old age, *Ecc 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* The only thing that will safeguard us through age is the remembrance of our God.

Life gets harder as we approach our end, and it does not get better except for the blessed hope of Christ in our lives. It is only by keeping the Creator Jesus in the

forefront of your mind when you are young that you will have the strength to cope when you are old, *Ecc 12:1 Keep your Creator in mind while you are young! In years to come, you will be burdened down with troubles and say, "I don't enjoy life anymore."* *Ecc 12:2 Someday the light of the sun and the moon and the stars will all seem dim to you. Rain clouds will remain over your head.* *Ecc 12:3 Your body will grow feeble, your teeth will decay, and your eyesight fail.* *Ecc 12:4 The noisy grinding of grain will be shut out by your deaf ears, but even the song of a bird will keep you awake.* *Ecc 12:5 You will be afraid to climb up a hill or walk down a road. Your hair will turn as white as almond blossoms. You will feel lifeless and drag along like an old grasshopper. We each go to our eternal home, and the streets are filled with those who mourn.* CEV.

To the men on the cross with Jesus, their time of reckoning had come and the end fast approached, and they railed against Him, *Mat 27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.* I was led to question the number of people crucified with Jesus. I don't think it was as exclusive as three, in fact, with the massive Jewish population in town for Passover, it was a good opportunity to show Roman power and send a warning to the population conveniently gathered. There were men who had committed murder and insurrection, so there were other men to be crucified, *Mar 15:6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.* *Mar 15:7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay **bound with them that had made insurrection** with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.*

Those people who think that it was three lonely crosses on a romantic green hill far away, have lost sight of the brutality of the Romans and the hatred of the seditious Jews. There is no reason to think it was so few crucified, and the message delivered at Passover was "it doesn't pay to mess with Rome".

I have often been confused by the difference in the Gospels by the "numbers" it uses, for example, *Mat 20:29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.* *Mat 20:30 And, behold, **two blind men sitting by the way side**, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* *Mat 20:31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.....and.....* *Luk 18:35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, **a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:*** *Luk 18:36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.* *Luk 18:37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.* *Luk 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.* Was it two men or one man?

And again in, *Mat 8:28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him **two possessed with devils**, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.....and..... Luk 8:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city **a certain man, which had devils long time**, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* Was it two men or one man?

I find there are two attitudes of mind to resolving scriptural problems, the believing mind which accepts the inspiration of Scripture and so looks to explain any conflicts and the unbelieving and unthinking mind which takes the conflict as a sign that the Bible is wrong and not inspired. With this in mind we shall turn to the crucifixion of Jesus and explore another apparent confusion, because it says *Luk 23:39 And **one of the malefactors** which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.....Mat 27:44 **The thieves also**, which were crucified with him, **cast the same in his teeth**.* Did those crucified with Him revile Him or did only one revile Him? Or is there another explanation?

Other than ultradispensationalism, Ethelbert William Bullinger had many unusual views. For example, Bullinger argued that the death of Jesus occurred on a Wednesday, not a Friday, after Pilate had condemned him at the previous midnight and that Jesus was crucified on a single upright stake without crossbar with four, not just two, criminals and held that this last view was supported by a group of five crosses of different origins (all with crossbar) in Brittany (put together in the 18th century). Groups of crosses are found also in other parts of Brittany gathered together for reasons that are now difficult to explain. Examples are a pair in front of a chapel at Croaziou and three at Pont Hir. However, Bullinger (1837–1913) attached special significance to the group of five at Ploubezre, claiming that it was a confirmation of his theory that Jesus was crucified with four, not just two, criminals: two thieves and two other malefactors.



We might dismiss this author of the Companion Bible as being a crank, but we should at least examine the possibility that there were four people crucified with Jesus, and possibly a lot more.

According to John in the KJV, *Joh 19:18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.* More correctly it says, “the crucified two others with Him thence and thence with Jesus in the middle”.

The Greek word order is slightly different than the English word order, so we could literally translate as: “and with him two others on this side and on that side, but Jesus in the middle.” This would make it clear that there were two others “on this side” and two others “on that side.” However, the phrase ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, “thence and thence”, is somewhat idiomatic and is perhaps better translated into English as “on either side.” It is helpful to know that the phrase ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν appears one other time in the Bible, in Revelation 22:2, which is referring to the tree of life growing “on either side” of the River of Life. If John 19:18 was translated the same way as Revelation 22:2, but with the recognition that duo, “two,” immediately precedes it as δύο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, we would have, “two on either side.” Spirit and Truth website.

The description of the criminals differs, but if there were at least four of them it could be an accurate description, *Luk 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors (κακοῦργος), one on the right hand, and the other on the left.....Mat 27:38 Then were there two thieves (λησστης} crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.*

Also we find, *Joh 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. Joh 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.* They come to the first one in the group, and the second one in the group but the third person in the group, in the middle, Jesus, was already dead. There certainly seems to be evidence for more than 3 persons killed.

We may be right in our excursus or we may be wrong. But it does not depend on how many people were crucified with Jesus, whether they were robbers, malefactors or murderers, it does not matter what day of the week He was executed on, it does not matter whether it was a cross or a stake, as these things do not affect the efficacy of His sacrifice, and we should not cause divisions by our personal understanding of them. I am not defined by this peripheral knowledge but I am defined by whether I believe in Christ, *1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 1Co 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

The differences in number of persons in the miracles of Jesus may just be down to writer style, highlighting the chief person in the dialogue, or the writer’s emphasis, not to a mistake in the recollection of events. Remember, the writers knew each

other and were alive to corroborate events, so the differences point to different emphasis.

The universal condemnation of Jesus is given by the superscription of Pilate, giving his reason for condemnation, written in the three major languages of the then world, *Luk 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS*. The priests insisted He was not, but Pilate let the record stand, *Joh 19:21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Joh 19:22 Pilate answered, **What I have written I have written***. Pilate at least got that bit right.

## 215. Paradise Regained *Luke 23: 39 - 43*

*Luk 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. Luk 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? Luk 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. Luk 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Luk 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

The two “malefactors” have different opinions about the Messiah. One of them asked Him to save himself, the other malefactor and Jesus, the other one rather philosophically takes it on the chin and says that they are getting what they deserve but Jesus does not deserve death. One man wanted them all to escape this death, the other man realised that they deserved death, and I imagine that they had done something pretty desperate to warrant the death sentence, *Luk 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss*.

It is a strange conversation to be having, a surreal conversation, to be saying anything when you have iron nails bashed through your flesh, with your heart sagging in your chest, the sickness of pain overcoming you and moving in and out of consciousness. But a breathless and poignant conversation they have, and it closes with one of the men, not asking for deliverance in this life but deliverance in the next life, *Luk 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*.

From the man's knowledge of Jesus, Jesus' innocence, the Kingdom of God as His possession, His deity as Lord over life and death, the man must have had a peripheral belief in Jesus, which death alone brought into sharp focus. I imagine the man thought well of Jesus, but not enough to commit his life to Him when he first gained that knowledge, but the circumstances had changed dramatically when the man was faced with the death sentence, and with hell looming large before him, he asks for mercy, to come into Jesus kingdom. And as no man gets into the kingdom without the new birth, the man's change must have been genuine and his repentance real.

In this life there are many who think Jesus is good, and they do not blaspheme His name, and they go to church occasionally, and they are good neighbours and kind, in fact they are outwardly Christian to all intents and purposes. But inside them, in their heart, there is too much of a pull from the world, and these people are like those that say, "There's plenty of time to repent when I'm old, I'll commit my life to Jesus then". I do not think that they have thought really seriously about death until now.

We have here, two types of person, who have spent their lives in a fantasy world where God works for them and death is not real. One of the men is a "chancer", a person who goes through life taking his chances, where opportunity offers him an advantage in life, and he is the eternal optimist. The second man is a realist, he takes life as it comes and resigns himself to it. To the chancer, the optimist, life is built around him, and God is there to serve him. The chancer's god is like a Genie in a bottle, who you call when you want help. He is the god you want when you are thrust into battle and cowering in a trench, and cry "save me". He is the god you call out to when you are in uncertainty, pain, grief, sadness and illness, but a god you can put away when things go well and the sun shines and you have no more need of him. He is a keepsake for good luck, just in case you have need of him, he doesn't cost you a penny and, so you think, there is nothing you have to do for him.

He is like a cross or a crucifix, a good luck charm for the Christian, and the bigger and more "clangy and blingy" your crosses are, and the better they serve you, which is why I suppose, the religious leaders are at pains to have the biggest, because they have more need of them. By the way, crosses only came into the churches history two centuries after Christ, and before that time they didn't need good luck charms.

When I was in my teens, and ignorant of all religion, I dabbled in the occult. It had the effect of scaring me rigid and so I used to sleep with the light on, so I could see what was coming to get me. I reasoned that it would give me greater protection, if I had a cross under my pillow and a bible at hand, because I had read that these

were powerful symbols in opposing the forces of darkness. I hadn't then come across the power of Christ so I was mired in superstition. I got hold of a Gideon's New Testament, but where could I find a cross? I had the brilliant idea of making one, big but not too big, and one I could hide in my jacket if need be.

And so I set about crafting one, and I was sure that it would work and I was like that superstitious fool who went after the work of his own hands, *Isa 44:13 Some woodcarver measures a piece of wood, then draws an outline. The idol is carefully carved with each detail exact. At last it looks like a person and is placed in a temple. Isa 44:14 Either cedar, cypress, oak, or any tree from the forest may be chosen. Or even a pine tree planted by the woodcarver and watered by the rain. Isa 44:15 Some of the wood is used to make a fire for heating or for cooking. One piece is made into an idol, then the woodcarver bows down and worships it. Isa 44:16 He enjoys the warm fire and the meat that was roasted over the burning coals. Isa 44:17 Afterwards, he bows down to worship the wooden idol. "Protect me!" he says. "You are my god." Isa 44:18 Those who worship idols are stupid and blind! CEV.*

The chancer will try anything to get what he wants and believe anything to get it, and it doesn't matter how foolish it is, if it works it works. The pragmatist, the second man has a more realistic view of life, "que sera sera" is his motto, whatever will be will be. He is a man who calls it fate, or if he is honest, it is the providence of God. He sees his life for what it is and he doesn't see miracles as a realistic way of escaping life's consequence. He realises that the cruel Roman soldiers, his skilled executioners, knew exactly what they were doing and did the minimum to ensure that he would suffer horribly. Even if the iron nails that supported him were to miraculously fall out, he would only slump to the ground, because he was mortally wounded and death was not far away. He suffered for the life he had lived, and he saw that it was just, but he had a hope. It was not just remission of his sins but a change in his standing with God.

The Lord's table was initiated as a memorial of Christ, NOT JUST His death but his resurrection, *Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Mat 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* It is the continual reminder of His work on our behalf. His death for our offences, his resurrection to make us right with God, *Rom 4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

His death only acknowledges our offences, it does nothing to change our standing in God. The resurrection of Christ changes our standing and we become right in the eyes of God. I am fully free, liberated in Christ when I have the complete process, *Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

The second man who spoke, has asked to be with Christ in the forever, and he wanted to be with Him, not just to be saved from death by Him. He sees beyond death to the resurrection. He partakes in death with Christ and he looks forward to life with Christ, and at that point in his being, he is nearer to glory than most people who call themselves Christian. He is one of the lucky few who found Christ on His death bed. The lesson is, if you forget Him now and don't remember Him often, He will forget you when you cry out for Him, *Luk 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

What is Paradise? Paradise" initially came from a Persian word that the Greeks modified into "paradeisos" meaning "enclosed park." In Hellenistic Greek, παράδεισος was also used in the Septuagint in reference to the Garden of Eden. The word "paradise" occurs in 31 cases in the Septuagint, and the Greek translators certainly thought that was the word to describe the garden, and it is the word the NT writers use for Eden, *Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

It occurs in Genesis, *Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden (τῷ παραδείσῳ) to dress it and to keep it.* It was used of Sodom and Gomorrah, *Gen 13:10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD (ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ), like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.* And God would make Zion, the fortified capital Jerusalem, like paradise, *Isa 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD (παράδεισον κυρίου); joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. Isa 51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.*

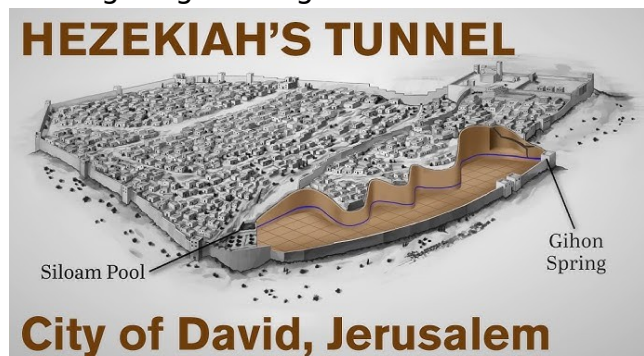


Where was Eden, the Paradise of God? That is a mystery but there is circumstantial evidence that it was in Jerusalem. Far fetched, I don't know but here are some evidences for it. People say because of the modern position of the rivers in Genesis chapter 2, it must be in Mesopotamia, *Gen 2:10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. Gen 2:11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; Gen 2:12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. Gen 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. Gen 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.*

To say that these rivers today are in exactly the same position as the rivers were before the Flood of Noah, is just not true or logical. The colossal flood that came in the days of Noah, destroyed the world that existed then, and would have removed all trace of the original rivers, *2Pe 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 2Pe 3:6 **Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*** They may bear the same names as the original rivers because they were known of by Noah and his sons, but not be in the location of the original rivers. The position of Eden is lost to us.

One river name is interesting and may have been adopted because of its significance to Eden or Paradise. It is the Gihon. Gihon spring fed water underground into the city of Jerusalem and early on it was probably the reason the Jebusites held on as long as they did, and were the last of the inhabitants of Canaan to be subdued. Water is a scarce and precious resource.

Hezekiah's tunnel is possibly the most amazing engineering achievement from Biblical times that is still completely intact. The book of Kings records Solomon's anointing at the Gihon spring when he is crowned, *1Ki 1:32 Then David said, "Tell Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah to come here." When they arrived, 1Ki 1:33 he told them: Take along some of my officials and have Solomon ride my own mule to Gihon Spring. 1Ki 1:34 When you get there, Zadok and Nathan will make Solomon the new king of Israel. Then after the ceremony is over, have someone blow a trumpet and tell everyone to shout, "Long live King Solomon!" 1Ki 1:35 Bring him back*



*here, and he will take my place as king. He is the one I have chosen to rule Israel and Judah. CEV.*

The book of Chronicles records how later King Hezekiah blocked the spring's outlet, and directed the water into the city, *2Ch 32:2 As soon as Hezekiah learned that Sennacherib was planning to attack Jerusalem, 2Ch 32:3 he and his officials worked out a plan to cut off the supply of water outside the city, so that the Assyrians would have no water when they came to attack. The officials got together a large work force that stopped up the springs and streams near Jerusalem. CEV.*

The tunnel of Hezekiah ran down to the pool of Siloam where Jesus does a miracle, *Joh 9:6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, Joh 9:7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. Joh 9:8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?* The man has no more use for this pool.

During the reign of Herod the Great, improvements were made to the Pool of Siloam. The pool itself was enlarged, and a large arcade (a set of arches) was built around the pool. Another arcade divided the pool, probably to create separate areas for men and women. During this time, the poor and sick people would often come to the Pool of Siloam to bathe. It was a mikvah, a ritual washing pool. This traditional statement suggests it became more than a mikvah,

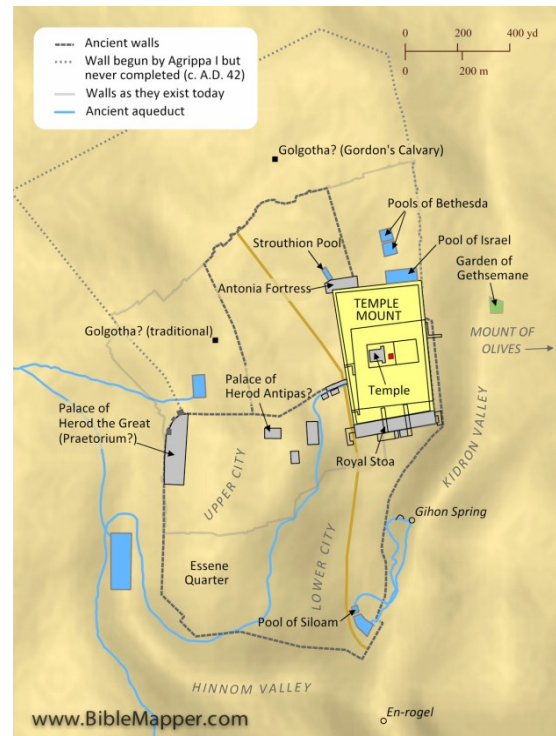
But it is during the time of Christ that the Pool of Siloam finds its true significance. Because the pool was near the temple, its water was used for a special ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles. Every morning during that joyful feast, a priest would take a golden vessel to the Pool of Siloam, fill it with water from the pool, and bring it back to the altar amid the shouts of the people. Then, as the crowd chanted the Hallel (Psalms 113—118), that priest poured out the water on the west side of the altar, and another priest poured a drink offering of wine on the east side of the altar. This ritual was probably to illustrate Isaiah 12:3, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

However, on the eighth and final day of the feast, the ritual was not repeated. And that is exactly when Jesus chose to make a startling announcement: “On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them’” (John 7:37–38). On the one day of the feast when no water was poured, Jesus stood up and filled the gap.

The “water” He offers (the Holy Spirit, verse 39) is better than the waters of Siloam. In offering the water of life, Jesus identified Himself with the rock in the wilderness that gave water to the Hebrews (see 1 Corinthians 10:4).

This water is very special to Jerusalem and may have brought thoughts of Paradise to the inhabitants, especially when the Temple was constructed. The Gihon is living water not stagnant water. Together with the Temple on the mountains of Israel it may have reminded the people of paradise. The Temple had the symbols of the Cherubim guarding the way to the Tree of Life, the Ark of the Covenant had the Law symbolic of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and with the development of revelation, the earthly Temple becomes more like the paradise of God.

*Rev 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. Rev 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*



## 216. It is Finished *Luke 23: 44 - 46*

*Luk 23:44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Luk 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. Luk 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

Our Jesus is dying. According to the Gospel of Mark, he endured the torment of crucifixion from the third hour (between approximately 9 a.m. and noon), until his death at the ninth hour, corresponding to about 3 p.m. *Mar 15:25 And it was the **third hour**, and they crucified him..... Mar 15:33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Mar 15:34 And at **the ninth hour** Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Six hours in a rigid position, 6 hours alone, 6 hours dying for sins which He did not commit. Our Lord must have had some strength to endure that for as long as He did.

According to the New Testament, Golgotha was the name of the site where Jesus was crucified. In the Archaeological Views column, "Golgotha: Is the Holy Sepulchre Church Authentic?" Where is Golgotha today? The exact location where Jesus was crucified is disputed. In the fourth century A.D. the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built at the site of Golgotha as identified by Roman emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, a mystic obsessed with the true cross. However, scholars began to question this identification in the 19th century, since the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is inside the city walls of the present-day Old City of Jerusalem. Golgotha would have to have been located outside the city in accordance with Roman and Jewish customs of the time.

I think it was in the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom. The Valley of Hinnom is first mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as part of the border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin *Jos 15:8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:*

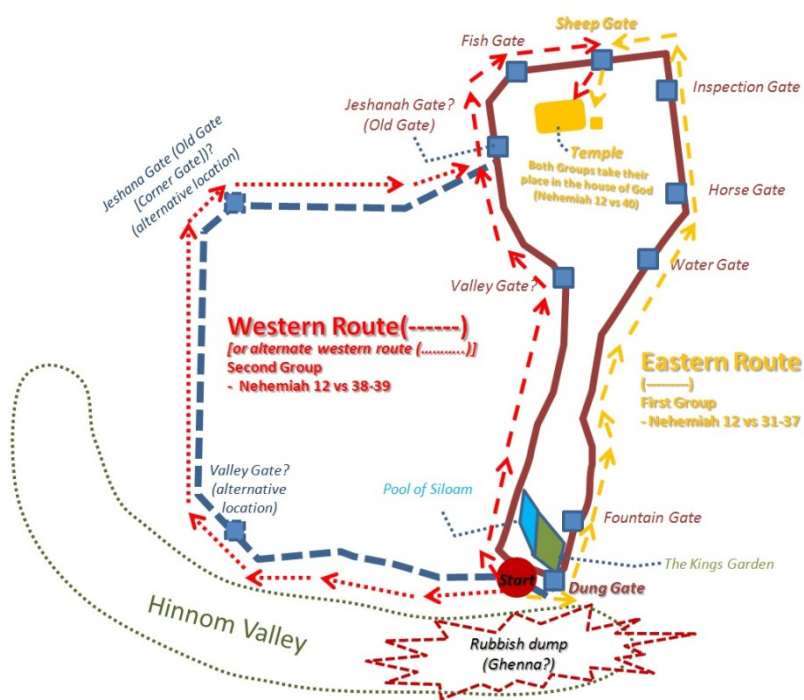
During the late First Temple period, it was the site of the Tophet, where some of the kings of Judah had sacrificed their children by fire *Jer 7:31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.* Thereafter, it was cursed by the prophet Jeremiah, *Jer 19:2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, Jer 19:3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Jer 19:4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; Jer 19:5 They have built also the high*

places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:

Something that we do not think about is the logistics involved in running a city. A good water supply is essential, then there is the heat, flies, parasites, disease and stink which must have driven the people to find a solution for waste management. Not only was there human waste but there was animal waste, and if you think about it, there were massive amounts of it, *1Ki 8:63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.* They had to dispose of the dung and offal of the Temple, and of the animals queuing to be killed, *Exo 29:14 But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, **shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering.*** They wouldn't like to have a long journey for that, so the point of disposal would have been fairly close. They would have wanted to carry it downhill, so the place of disposal is much lower down the mountain.

Jerusalem had to dispose of the rubbish and soil of its inhabitants and its sacrifices, and although the Valley of Hinnom, Gehenna, is not mentioned as a rubbish tip, they did have rubbish and they threw it out by way of the Dung gate, an ancient gate in the Jerusalem wall, *Neh 3:13 The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall **unto the dung gate.*** *Neh 3:14 But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.* The Jews were obsessed with ritual cleanliness, so the fresh water, which was located in the Pool of Siloam was absolutely necessary and would not be polluted by the filth of the city. Today, the Pool of Siloam is the lowest place in altitude within the historical city of Jerusalem, with an elevation of about 625 metres (2,051 ft) above sea level.

So I reckon that our Lord was killed outside the City walls, *Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with*



*his own blood, suffered without the gate. Heb 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* He was killed in a place where they found it easy to dispose of criminals, and you didn't have to bury them, after all they were the lowest of the low in Rome's eyes, scum of the earth. He died on a stinking rat infested dunghill, with the lowest of the low and He was killed outside of the City to prevent defilement of those celebrating Passover. We cannot imagine the stench of the place buzzing with flies and the heat that went with that place.

It seems to me that the place of the skull was the antithesis of the idyllic place in the hymn by Cecil Francis Alexander wrote of,

There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.

The text was first published in Hymns for Little Children (1848). I wonder how many children like me wondered why Jesus was crucified on a far away green hill, without a wall around it? This coloured mine and I daresay many other people's views of the crucifixion, as being a peaceful expiration of Jesus in a sort of attractive landscape, and it hid the gory details of what really happened, and the severity of it.

That day, the light of the world went out, *Luk 23:44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a **darkness over all the earth** until the ninth hour.* Man did not want Him and so He gives them a taste of that place where they go without Him, the place they wanted for themselves and it is darkness. Not just in the sense of physical darkness but a spiritual darkness, to continually remind them that there is no sense or meaning to anything in a life without Jesus. There is just existence, a meaningless existence to which man tries to give meaning, but they all have different ideas as to what it means, and in their confusion they have nothing.

Luke says that the veil of the Temple was torn, and the sun darkened, *Luk 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.* That ancient place where access was open only to the High priest and only on one occasion in the year, on the Day of Atonement, was now bared for all men to see, and a way of entry was made. The earth was darkened so that the man who was not in darkness could see the revelation of His Lord.

Matthew gives us more detail, *Mat 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from **the top to the bottom**; and the earth did quake, and **the rocks rent**; Mat 27:52 And the graves were opened; and many **bodies of the saints which slept arose**, Mat 27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* He says, the veil of the

Temple was torn from heaven to earth, that there was an earthquake and that dead saints lived again. **The dead saints not the dead unbelievers.** He doesn't say whether they were saints of hundreds of years before this time or not.

It is a mini-apocalypse, a mini-judgement day, a token of the end of the world, which is seen in Revelation, *Rev 11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. Rev 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. Rev 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

And when the dead are raised, the last enemy of the saints is conquered, *1Co 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 1Co 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 1Co 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* This is all summed up by the events leading to the death of Jesus.

Finally He cries out, *Luk 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.* John says, *Joh 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Joh 19:29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. Joh 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, **he said, It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

This appears to be a quote of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, *Psa 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* With the last verse of the Psalm, a cry of victory, *Psa 22:31 His generation yet to be born will glorify him. And they will all declare, "It is finished!"* TPT. This translation has rendered the OT as "it is finished" although the Greek OT does not use the same word as the NT, but I think that it is the right sense, of a task completed or finished. The Psalm is a description of the Crucifixion and describes the anguish of the Messiah perfectly.

What does the word "finished" mean? The word *τελέω* means to make an end of something. We get the word telescope from this, to see into the distance to the end.



Jesus had reached the end or completion of His work, τετελεσται, the completed work of Christ. All of the OT here is brought to an end in the person of Jesus. All of the history leading to Him, all of the sacrifices pointing the way to Him, all of the symbols connected with worship, from the altars, the candlestick, the incense and the showbread, the ark of the covenant which pointed towards the end, Jesus.

The buildings, the Ark of Noah, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the Temple and its services get their meaning from Jesus, who is their end goal, for they spoke only of Him, and when we have Him, what need have we of these primitive symbols. The sheep and goats of the offerings, the wave offerings, the firstfruits of the harvest, and the Jubilee celebration spoke of Jesus, and when we truly have Him, what need is there for these things which were mere shadows of the body which was Christ.

From Jerusalem, Jesus cries, "it is finished", and for those obdurate souls that think by hanging on to the things which are past, the Jewish traditions and things of a bygone age is being Holy, or those who would have Him reconstruct that which is finished, or as Paul says, *Gal 2:18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor*, is righteous, they are denying the finished work of the Messiah.

It is finished does not mean that we have to invent lies about where events happened and put gold encrusted edifices about where it never happened. It doesn't need more finishing, by building another Temple rebuilt by some hitherto unknown race of future Jewish people. This is all aimed at living the life in Jerusalem which is now in bondage with her children, and Jesus said emphatically, "it is finished".

All that was left to the disciples to do was to deliver the message of His accomplishment. This is your task, not going about inventing myths to mislead and misguide good people, lading them with the baggage of religion that you have invented. **IT IS FINISHED.**

## 217. A Righteous Man *Luke 23: 47 - 52*

*Luk 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. Luk 23:48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. Luk 23:49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. Luk 23:50 And, behold,*



*there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: Luk 23:51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. Luk 23:52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Luk 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.*

We saw that a malefactor recognised the Messiah, and now, a Roman Centurion recognised Him as a righteous man, *Luk 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.* Matthew says that the Centurion and those with him were affected by the earthquake and they said He was the Son of God, *Mat 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

John gives us a bit more information about the death of our Lord, *Joh 19:31 **The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken,** and that they might be taken away. Joh 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. Joh 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: Joh 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. Joh 19:35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. Joh 19:36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. Joh 19:37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

The Jews wanted to get on with “their” religion, and with the beloved son of the vineyard owner disposed of, and dead, it was back to normal. They, the Jews, asked the Romans to break the crucified men’s legs, to hurry their death along, because they wanted to get on and celebrate the Sabbath. They thought that in their world, the danger was past, there was no more threat, but they were wrong, for what had happened had branded them as rebels and murderers, and the vineyard owner was coming for them. They had triggered the apocalypse upon themselves and their Nation, *Luk 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. Luk 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?*

We tend to concentrate on the events surrounding Jesus death, and rightly so, but at the same time overlook the events which were collateral to our Lord's death. We sit back and bask in the glow of the resurrection, as if that is the end of the matter, we are safe and there is nothing else to worry about. But that event only made the world more dangerous, *Dan 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Dan 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

The Kingdom of Jesus starts with Jesus, and it starts from the resurrection. Jesus had said "it is finished" concerning His redemptive work, His death, fulfilling the OT, but He had not said, "it is the end", because He had much work still to do. This is where His people, Christians, do their bit, being Christians, showing the Master as He is, not building their own image of what they think He looks like but what He really is like, the Biblical Jesus. We should never forget Ghandi's words about us, "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. **Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.**" Yes they are unlike Christ, because they are not of Christ.

The war was only just beginning, Jesus disciples were going to be part of that war, and every believer was going to be a part of it as well. There was not going to be a peace and calm, a truce between the evil philosophies of men, there would be a pitched battle against principalities and powers, science so called, and the religious leaders who peddle their lies against Jesus. We should not forget that the churches, the assembly of God's people, is infiltrated by antichrist's, Judas's, men desiring the pre-eminence, false brethren spying out our liberty, false prophets, tares, ungodly men, hypocrites, evil men and impostors, deceivers, wolves in sheep's clothing, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, savage wolves, and we must be very careful that we see them and do not let them in.

Go to the Seven Churches in the book of Revelation and you will see the working of satan in the Churches. The devil is amongst us, he has come down to us, and even among the faithful, he works his mischief, *Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* We have been lulled into a complacent slumber instead of being on our guard.

The admission from a Roman peacekeeper that they had made a mistake and killed the Son of God, that this man Jesus was a righteous man, that He was innocent of

all charges, is a damning indictment of the religious leaders, and the Roman justice system. The hatred against Jesus had made the religious leaders see through a red haze of madness which could only be satisfied by the killing, the silencing, of Jesus. As Jesus had said to them, *Luk 11:47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.*

Stephen puts it very strongly, *Act 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Act 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before **of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:** Act 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Some of the people who killed Jesus may have repented of doing so, but it was too late to do anything about it. The Passion of the Christ is only matched by the passion of the multitude, and when the heat of the moment had cooled and some semblance of sanity had returned, the people saw what they had done, *Luk 23:48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, **smote their breasts**, and returned.* Why did they pound their chest? Remorse, guilt, their hearts smiting them, feelings of conscience? All of these perhaps.

Another man appears to us, Joseph of Arimathea, a good man and he is a disciple of Jesus, *Luk 23:50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: Luk 23:51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.* Present at the show trial of Jesus, he had not given his consent to killing Jesus.

We can piece together a picture of this man from the other Gospels, as they all give testimony of him. In Matthew, he is called a disciple of Jesus, and obviously one who did not run away, *Mat 27:57 When the even was come, there came a **rich man** of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was **Jesus' disciple**.*

Mark notes that he was wealthy, a rich man, and an honourable counsellor, one who had access to the Sanhedrin, and one who “waited for the kingdom of God”, *Mar 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, **an honourable counsellor**, which also **waited for the kingdom of God**, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*

John gives us even more information, *Joh 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought*

*Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. Joh 19:39 And there came **also Nicodemus**, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and **brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.** Joh 19:40 **Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.***

Joseph wanted to get hold of the body, and so goes to Pilate, in secret. John says for “fear of the Jews”, but these are fine words coming from one who is nowhere to be seen after the crucifixion. Joseph wasn’t afraid to go to Pilate and ask for the body, so why should he be scared of a few powerless Jews? Perhaps his “fear of the Jews” was because they might intervene in his intention to take the body, and he is to be commended for that.

He is not alone in his endeavour as we see another member of the Sanhedrin come to help Joseph bury Jesus, namely Nicodemus. These two older men do what the disciples, the 12, fail to do. They collect the body of their master and give it a good Jewish burial. Perhaps they had some help from their house servants, as they took the body away.

We see that the place of burial was a fresh grave, unused by anyone before, *Mat 27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.* It was a rock hewn tomb and had a great stone to roll in the doorway to stop grave robbers. John says it was in a garden, but as they buried people outside the city, we assume Jesus was not buried in the city. I wonder if they later on, used this tomb for its original purpose, a sepulchre for Joseph.

It is a far cry from those days when only these men turned up for the funeral of Jesus. Today the place that they presume Jesus is buried in has turned into a circus of all religions, a theme park. The so called holy sepulchre is a gold encrusted tourist attraction. Control of the church itself is shared among several Christian denominations and secular entities in complicated arrangements essentially unchanged for over 160 years, and some for much longer. The main denominations sharing property over parts of the church are the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic, and to a lesser degree the Coptic, Syriac, and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

The “Status Quo” is an understanding among religious communities with respect to nine shared religious sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The status quo stemmed from a decree of Ottoman sultan Osman III in 1757 that preserved the division of ownership and responsibilities of various Christian holy places. What they squabble

over today they held in contempt in the past. By the way, the key to the church of the holy sepulchre is held by a Muslim!

Where was Aramathea? It appears in 1 Samuel as the place Elkanah father of Samuel was born, *1Sa 1:1 There was a man of Armathaim Sipha, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Helkana, a son of Jeremeel the son of Elias the son of Thoke, in Nasib Ephraim.* Brenton. In the LXX it is called αρμαθαμ. Probably, Joseph was a distant relative of Samuel.



When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, those taken captive were assembled in Ramah before being moved to Babylon (Jeremiah 40:1). Jeremiah said: A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more, words said at Jesus birth as well.

Many spurious stories and legends have arisen regarding Joseph.

Some purport that Joseph of Arimathea was the uncle of Jesus' mother, Mary. However, the Bible makes no such connection, so the claim is unsubstantiated. In addition, Joseph supposedly made many trips to Britain for trade and is said to have eventually brought the gospel to that country. Again, though, the Bible is silent about Joseph after Jesus' burial, so we cannot know for sure what path he took later in life. What we do know is what we find in the Scriptures: Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and part of the Sanhedrin, and he procured Jesus' body and laid it in his own tomb, from which Jesus would rise again in power three days later.

## 218. The Preparation *Luke 23: 53 - 56*

*Luk 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. Luk 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. Luk 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. Luk 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

The timescale for the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus is not absolutely clear, as we have already said, though some think that they have reasoned them out. Perhaps it is not necessary to know them and we waste our time straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. The Gospel writers knew what they were saying and said what they meant so we must dismiss the idea that the writers of the NT made any mistakes. The idea that all four of the Gospel writers got the chronology wrong is not true, and it is nonsense to believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all forgot what they had written from one chapter to the next?

I am not decided in my mind what day Jesus was crucified on but I take the truth of Scripture when it says, *Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Not 2½ days, not 2 days but 3 days and 3 nights. So the rest of our ideas must harmonise with this.

Of course, what we would like is a much more detailed chronological account of the crucifixion, a day by day, hour by hour, blow by blow account of the precise events, and a thesaurus to go with the account giving the exact meaning of the words used. It would make it easier for our curious minds. What seems to have happened though is, that the four writers got together and decided among themselves not to give an exact version of events, but deliberately leave some bits out, which another writer might include, and so they created a frustrating mystery. Or they might have thought these events that happened were sufficiently explained in their accounts and that is all that the reader should have.

Something in the accounts has always bothered me. It is that word “preparation”, *παρασκευή*, which is used in all of the Gospels,

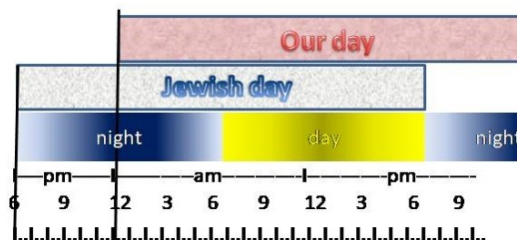
- *Mat 27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of **the preparation**, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,*
- *Mar 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was **the preparation**, that is, the day before the sabbath,*
- *Luk 23:54 And that day was **the preparation**, and the sabbath drew on.*
- *Joh 19:14 And it was **the preparation of the passover**, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*
- *Joh 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was **the preparation**, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*
- *Joh 19:42 There laid they Jesus therefore because **of the Jews' preparation day**; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

Does the word, preparation refer to the same “preparation” in every case? It might help us if we knew. We see that one “preparation” was the preparation of the Passover, *Joh 19:14 And it was **the preparation of the passover**, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!* So do they all refer to the preparation of the Passover? Was there a preparation for the first day of unleavened bread because that too was a Sabbath? Passover was on the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan and the 15<sup>th</sup> Nisan was the start of the feast of unleavened bread.

The OT explains the rules for the weekly Sabbath, and the Sabbath which occurs on the first day of the unleavened bread, the 15<sup>th</sup> Nisan, the day after Passover, *Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, **an holy convocation**; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. Lev 23:4 These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have an **holy convocation**: ye shall do no servile work therein.* The holy convocation was a Sabbath when no work was done.

When John says it was “the preparation of the Passover”, did he mean it was the day that they prepared for the Passover, or that it was the Passover and that was the same day that they held a preparation for the Unleavened bread? Why say preparation of the Passover, as if there were a day before the Passover proper, well perhaps because they would have got the lamb ready? If Jesus was crucified on the preparation day, the next day was a Sabbath, but which Sabbath, the weekly Sabbath or the Unleavened Sabbath? It could be either, but I think it was the unleavened Sabbath, because that would allow for three days and three nights.

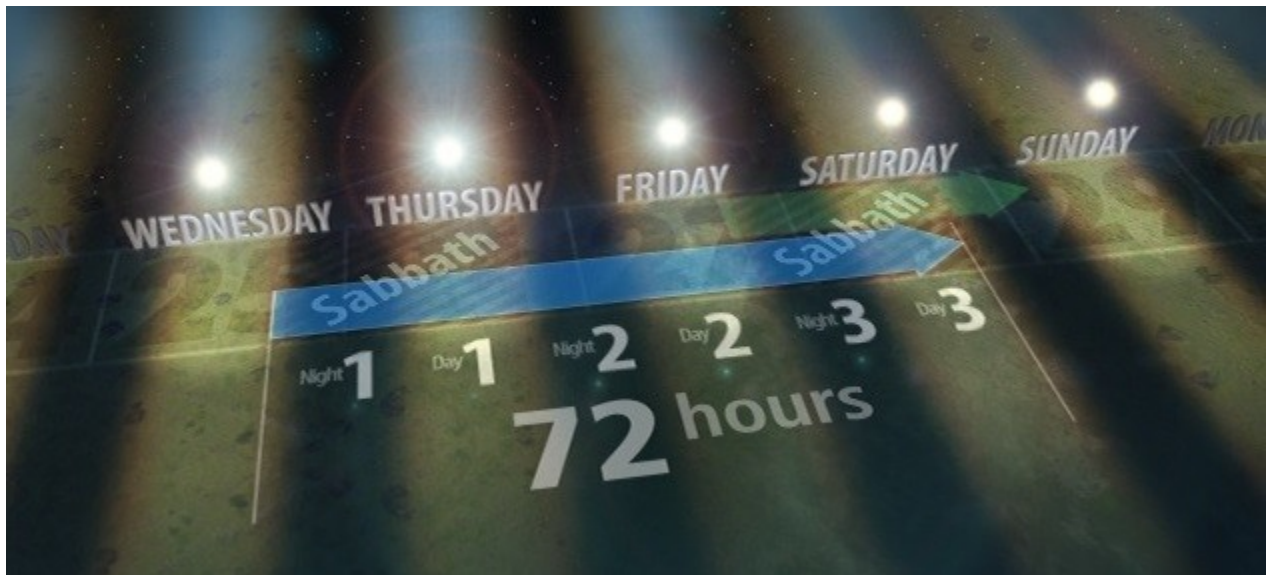
The Jewish day is different from our day, yes it has 24 hours but they do not start at the same place relative to the sun's position. A Jewish day starts at sunset and runs to the next sunset. Our western day starts at midnight and runs to midnight. If we overlaid the Jewish day upon our day it would look like this illustration.



The sequence of the crucifixion would be

- The trial (continuing through our Wednesday night into the early hours of Wednesday morning)

- The crucifixion on Passover day (beginning on our Wednesday in the daytime)
- The internment (our Wednesday evening finishing by 6:00pm)
- The Sabbath of the unleavened bread (our Thursday beginning on the Wednesday evening at 6:00pm)
- The weekly Sabbath (our Friday beginning in the evening 6:00pm and going through to Saturday until 6:00pm)
- The first day of the week (our Sunday beginning Saturday evening 6:00pm)



Matthew says, *Mat 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.* The word Sabbath is in fact plural, Sabbaths, σαββατων, and appears to back up what I am saying.

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus buried Jesus in Josephs tomb, wrapping the body in linen on the Wednesday evening, because of the approaching Sabbath (of the Unleavened bread), *Luk 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. Luk 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.* Although the women are not mentioned in this enterprise, Luke says that they did know of the place of Jesus' burial, *Luk 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.*



The communication between all of the disciples is not known and we can only surmise what was going on. From the silence of the circle of twelve disciples, it suggests that they were in hiding after the terrible events, but their location was known to the women, *Luk 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.* The women also know the place of the burial of Jesus but seem not to know the Joseph and Nicodemus had provided spices, *Joh 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Joh 19:40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.* The women thought they would do the same thing, *Luk 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.* Perhaps the two groups did not communicate?

The women had watched the burial from a distance, *Mat 27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, Mat 27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. Mat 27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.....Mar 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.*

Where was Jesus buried? Your guess is as good as anybody's but don't fall in to the tradition hole, with its whitewashed and gold plated sepulchres, and big signs saying it is HERE! The Romans flattened Jerusalem and any places would have gone under tons of rubble. Its interesting that the Apostles did not record the places for posterity, perhaps it did not matter to them and they did not want what we have subsequently done to them, made them into shrines for the people without imaginations. It does not take long before the instrument of crucifixion becomes an object of worship, like Nehushtan, the bronze serpent, *2Ki 18:4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.*

I approach Jesus burial for the typology and prophecy it yields. I would have expected that Jesus would have begun His Exodus going from the East of the City, just as His relative David had done, and He does, *Act 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey, after the ascension.* The Mount of Olives Jewish cemetery is not only the largest in the world but possibly the oldest dating back 3000 years.

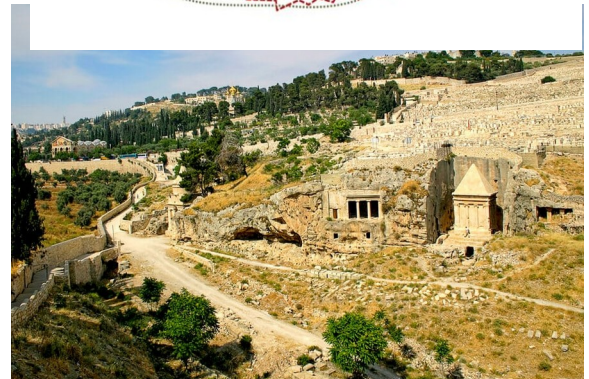
Isaiah prophecies of Jesus, *Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living:*

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for the transgression of my people was he stricken. Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and **with the rich in his death**; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. He was buried in a rock cut tomb, and this was most likely in the big necropolis, which is close to the garden of Gethsemane, and there are 1000's of tombs.

The tomb would have been a short distance from the place of execution Joh 19:42 *There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand*, as we have described before, so in view of the timescales, the time to see Pilate, the time to collect the body and the time to prepare Jesus for burial, a 3 hour window before sunset, it had to be fairly close (see diagram).

There is another statement about the Mount of Olives which I shall look at in closing, from the prophet Zechariah, Zec 14:1 *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.* Zec 14:2 *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.* Zec 14:3 ***Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*** Zec 14:4 ***And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*** Zec 14:5 *And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.* Zec 14:6 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:* Zec 14:7 *But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.* Zec 14:8 *And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.*



Zechariah 14 has no reference whatever to a millennial reign of Christ upon the earth. The Bible indisputably teaches that the second coming of the Lord will terminate all earthly affairs, *2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* The dispensational view does not work and is of relatively recent origin. The prophets spoke and Peter affirmed that, *Act 3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days, the days of the NT.*

Wayne Jackson points out,

- (1) If this chapter refers to the literal return of Christ (i.e., the second coming) upon the Mount of Olives, exactly who is it that will make that escape flight to the east when the mountain is cleft? It cannot be the wicked, for the Bible plainly teaches that they will be destroyed when the Lord returns (Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Moreover, it cannot be the righteous, for they will be “caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Who else, pray tell, is left?
- (2) Verse eight speaks of living waters going forth from Jerusalem in summer and in winter. Since summer and winter will occur only as long as the earth remains (Genesis 8:22), and as the earth will not remain beyond the coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:4, 10), it is obvious that the events of this verse cannot transpire after the literal return of Jesus—which supposedly is alluded to in verse four.
- (3) Verse twelve tells of Jehovah smiting his enemies and their “flesh” being consumed. Again, this cannot refer to a period after the literal return of Christ; the coming of the Lord will signal “the end,” at which point the dead will be raised, and the living—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—will be changed from flesh to a new, spiritual essence. We will pass from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:23-24, 51-53).

The language of Zechariah is, I think, a figurative depiction of the history of spiritual “Jerusalem” from the time of its commencement on the day of Pentecost, throughout the Christian age. Marten Woudstra had a nice summary of the matter:

From the mixed character of the imagery employed, referring now to cataclysmic upheavals, now to regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem, it seems

to this writer that no such literal interpretation of the passages is intended. The prophecy has in view various aspects of the gospel age with particular emphasis on its conclusion (1960, 377-378).

I see the Mount of Olives as being central to Christ's death, burial and resurrection, together with the start of the Gospel age, the age of the New Covenant.

<https://christiancourier.com/articles/dispensationalism-and-zechariah-14>

## 219. The First Day *Luke 24: 1 - 5*

*Luk 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. Luk 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. Luk 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Luk 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: Luk 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?*

Time has stopped for the world of man. Heaven, Scripture, communication with God, has become quiet, for three days and three nights, nothing. The male disciples have been quiet, perhaps in shock, wondering if this had really happened, after the months of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom, healing and miracles, teaching their hearts new things, their King lay dead, in a cold tomb. It was to them, the end of a dream. The women disciples were as ever, doing those motherly services to their dead King, keeping occupied despite the ongoing tragedy.

What was now going to occur would shake them to the core, shake man's belief forever in the centuries to come, divide the world in two, ***Zec 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*** The resurrection of Jesus the Messiah would be the touchstone of faith, *Rom 10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; Rom 10:9 That*

*if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Jesus came in the flesh the first time, came from the dead in the flesh by the resurrection, and will come again in like manner as He has gone. This is an article of our faith, the physical resurrection of Jesus, and was given in the first creed of the churches, *1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 1Co 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 1Co 15:4 **And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:** 1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.*

John is bold enough to say that if you do not believe that Christ is come in the flesh, then you are a deceiver and an anti Christ, *2Jn 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2Jn 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 2Jn 1:9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 2Jn 1:10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 2Jn 1:11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

What do we mean by this statement, “come in the flesh”? Do we mean the incarnation, the fleshly appearing of God with us, the baby in Bethlehem or do we mean the coming of the Lord Jesus back from the dead, after He was crucified? I know that we believe that Jesus is raised in the flesh, with a physical body, but with more attributes than us, and that He invited Thomas who doubted this to touch Him, *Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side:** and be not faithless, but believing. Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.* You could not do that if Jesus did not have a body, but it is good that we should think about this and confirm our faith in it.

When John talks about proving the spirit of a man, testing it to see if we are talking to a person who is of God or not, he is not telling us believers to talk to dead men, in the past, but to the living in the present, *1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 1Jn 4:2 **Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:** 1Jn 4:3 And*

*every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.* You must test them now to see if they are of the faith, and that test is “**did Jesus come in the flesh**”. If the person does not confess this, then you are to have no more religious conversation with them, *2Jn 1:10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed**: 2Jn 1:11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

So vital is it you believe this fact, that John makes it a touchstone of faith. We should say, “I believe the Jesus the Messiah, rose from the dead in human form”. Dr Gill says of these verses,

**.....every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God**; every doctrine which carries this truth in it; or every man that owns, and professes, and publishes this doctrine concerning Christ, is on the side of God and truth; and which contains several articles in it, respecting the person and office of Christ; as that he existed before he came in the flesh, not in the human nature, or as man, or as an angel, but as the Son of God, as a divine person, being truly and properly God; so that this confession takes in his divine Sonship, and proper deity, and **also his true and real humanity; that the Messiah was incarnate, against the Jews, and was God and man in one person; and that he was really man, and not in appearance only**, against the heretics of those times: and it also includes his offices, as that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah, which the Jews denied, and that he was the anointed prophet, priest, and King; and so is a confession or acknowledgment of all the doctrines of the Gospel, which came by him, as a prophet; and of his satisfaction, sacrifice, and intercession, as a priest; and of all his ordinances and commands as a King; and that he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men.

Now, whoever owns and declares this system of truth, "is of God"; not that everyone that assents unto this, or preaches it, is born of God; a man may believe, and confess all this, as the devils themselves do, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; but the spirit, or doctrine, which contains these things in it, is certainly of God, or comes from him; or whoever brings these truths with him, and preaches them, he is, so far as he does so, on the side of God and truth, and to be regarded.

Benson's Commentary mentions the importance of "the flesh" as:

"The clause imports, that this great personage, the Messiah, the Son of God, had really come in the flesh, and had a real human nature, in opposition to a sect which arose very early in the Christian Church, **called the Docetæ, who would not allow that Christ had a real body**, and that he really suffered, died, and rose again.

This sect St. John seems to have had in his eye throughout this epistle. Hence, in the very beginning of it, he speaks of seeing, hearing, and handling Christ; and here, to the fundamental article of Jesus's being the Messiah, he adds, that he came in the flesh; with which doctrine his atoning for sin by the sacrifice of himself, and his rising from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep, were closely and necessarily connected, and therefore the acknowledgment of it was a point of the greatest importance."

John says, *1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life*; The JW's twist the Scriptures to the point of making another Gospel out of Jesus. JW.org, their own website says,

Jesus' own words showed that he would not be resurrected with his flesh-and-blood body. He said that he would give his "flesh in behalf of the life of the world," as a ransom for mankind. (John 6:51; Matthew 20:28) If he had taken back his flesh when he was resurrected, he would have cancelled that ransom sacrifice. This could not have happened, though, for the Bible says that he sacrificed his flesh and blood "once for all time."—Hebrews 9:11, 12.

Such impudent and stupid exegesis deserves to be condemned loudly. Where do Jesus words ever say that He would not be resurrected with His flesh and blood? *Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world..... Mat 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*. There is not one shred of evidence that Jesus said that He would "not be resurrected with his flesh-and-blood body". These people are brazen liars and twist the Scriptures to suit themselves, *Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? Joh 2:21 **But he spake of the temple of his body.***

If Jesus had left His body, never to return to it, why bother to take it away, why not leave it there to show men the truth, but they didn't, *Luk 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.* Where did the body go? The angels said, *Luk 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, **Why seek ye the living among the dead?*** The angels did not say, He has left His body, and become a spirit, and the proof of that is the dead body lying here. Any sensible person would have said, "Yeah, pull the other leg, you've just hidden the body, and He is not really risen, you are just bluffing".

It was just this sort of uncertainty that prompted the chief priests and Pharisees to post a guard upon the sepulchre, *Mat 27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Mat 27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Mat 27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, **lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.** Mat 27:65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. Mat 27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.*

The JW's would agree with what they did, they would have guarded the body to make sure the spirit was all that remained. But that's not what happened, *Mat 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. Mat 28:2 **And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.** Mat 28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: Mat 28:4 And **for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.** Mat 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. Mat 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

He had gotten up, left the tomb and the women were invited to see where He lay. John adds more detail, *Joh 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Joh 20:2 **Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.** Joh 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.*



They were not expecting this for they had come to honour the dead not to be confronted by this event which added more confusion and anxiety to them. They had expected in the natural course of events, that having been killed, He would stay dead, for there was no person around like Jesus who could raise the dead. The women were expecting a dead body, Joseph had already used herbs on the dead body because he thought that it would undergo decomposition and stink, and they ***“have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him”***. They thought He had been taken by grave robbers.

The importance of the physical resurrection is a critical point of faith for the disciples.

## 220. He Has Risen *Luke 24: 6 - 11*

*Luk 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Luk 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Luk 24:8 And they remembered his words, Luk 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. Luk 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. Luk 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*

The disciples did not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus, *Mar 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Mar 16:10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. Mar 16:11 And they, **when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.....** Luk 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. Luk 24:11 **And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.....**Joh 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. Joh 20:9 **For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.** Joh 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. It was after Jesus was raised that they believed in the resurrection.*

The angel had said, “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” and went on to say, “*He is not here, but is risen*”, but with absolutely no instructions given as to where

to find Jesus. I find this intriguing, because I would have thought the first thing Jesus would have done was to have established the fact of His resurrection to His disciples and then to the world. He would have conquered death and He would have shown Himself triumphantly to the priests, to the Pharisees, to Pontius Pilate, to Herod, to the jeering masses who killed Him, and onward in a world tour of victory.

He to the contrary was reticent, even shy about it, making occasional short visits to select people, but Jesus had often taken the route of non-publicity, *Joh 7:3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. Joh 7:4 For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, **shew thyself to the world**.* He was very selective as to whom He showed Himself to, which seems to be at odds with His statement, *Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

If you consider many of the attempts that we make “to convert” somebody who is a non-believer, which end up in a verbal brawl, arguing about things that are not relevant to Christ, have we done what He said we are to do, by that action? “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations*”. I don’t think so. And if we consider our reaction and speech to those people who have some knowledge of faith, and differ from us, who say they are Christian, are we really “*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*”, or just arguing for our position? I don’t think so.

Just look for a moment at two witnesses, one to the non-believer and one to a believer. To the unbeliever first.....*Act 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. Act 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. Act 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Act 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; Act 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; Act 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Act 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said,*

*For we are also his offspring. Act 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. Act 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Act 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Paul does not use as his opening gambit, “have you Athenians been washed in the blood of the lamb”, or “What do you think about the state of the world”, or “you ought to believe in Jesus”. He has an opportunity to speak, but he doesn’t ask them any questions. He makes a **statement** of fact about Christianity, he states that God is the Creator, He made us, he says what He is and is not, he commands repentance, and states the fact about judgement, and that comes through a man whom He has appointed and raised from the dead. He starts with the Creation, which today men are afraid of as a subject, because they believe in anything but the direct creation by God, and they just do not know how to handle the subject. The Creation is as a result glossed over, apologised for, and the Gospel is weakened, and becomes another gospel.

Paul leaves it there. If they were interested in finding out further, it was up to them as individuals to enquire, but Paul was not going to spell it out in detail for a bunch of people who didn’t want to believe.

To those who believe in God, who are searching for the truth, we go to the method of Philip, *Act 8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Act 8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Act 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. Act 8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? Act 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

Philip was led by the Spirit to go towards the south at midday, when he would meet a man looking for the truth, and he was told to go and get in his chariot. A man travelling to Ethiopia just happened to be there at 12 o’clock, chance or Divine guidance?

There, because Philip knew the Scriptures, he was able to guide the man in his spiritual journey, *Act 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, **and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.** Act 8:36 And as they went on their*

way, they came unto a certain water: and **the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?** Act 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Act 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, **both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.** Act 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more:** and he went on his way rejoicing. Act 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. Philip has just pollinated the Eunuch. He explained the Scripture to him and the Eunuch believed. Philip baptised him, not having suggested it first, but he baptised him on the Eunuchs demand. Then having completed his work Philip just flies away. He makes no attempt at coercion, no pleading in tears for the poor sinner to consider and amend his ways, no emotional blackmail to tear the heart, just one on one, no forcing him into baptism, but just fulfilling the Spirits' command.

How different are the modern evangelists to Paul and Philip. The modern evangelists speak to you about the Christ, tell you of what He does for you, how He works to alleviate your troubles, how ready He is to welcome you, how He, by one meeting, can deliver you from eternal damnation. After one half hour of this marvellous ministry, the evangelist has convinced you to "give your life to Jesus", and if you are honest you know next to nothing about Jesus, only what you have been told by this man, but you are saved. You have received a "Jesus package", Jesus tied up with a pink ribbon, complete with an instruction manual, all you need, and that is about all a lot of people get to last them a lifetime. You have received Jesus in a manmade package, with all its prejudice, ignorance and bias, and because you never sought to find Christ for yourself, you were only too quick to get the package the man was handing out.

I return to the question, why didn't Jesus reveal Himself to everybody? He did not have to because He is in control of all things, and He will save His people, and no amount of pleading from an evangelist will save any more people than Jesus. Jesus has not come to rescue those who do not want rescuing, and the idea of an evangelist, as being a paramedic who saves people who are unconscious to the message is not true.

The man who wants a relationship with Jesus, has to find Jesus for himself. The man who lives and draws his strength from another human's faith is a parasite. He is as strong as he perceives his host to be, but his host will pass away and then what will become of him. I suppose that this is what the disciples and Apostles had done with Jesus, and they were drawing their strength from Him, and when He was dead, they were dead.

So why does Jesus want us anyway? There wasn't one thing in me that was nice, one thing that Jesus would say was a good trait, not one thing to admire or love, in fact so much to condemn and say that I was not worth the trouble. In fact Jesus could have said that for the whole race of Adam and not even bothered to die on the cross. What do I add to His Glory by Him dying for me? If He gives me everything that I am in Him, how do I add to His Glory? I suppose by seeing that although I have nothing of my own to give Him, yet I am a bearer of His light, I am an oil burner on His candlestick, I am entrusted to shine His light out so that others may see Him.

I am called to have fellowship with Him, to know Him, not just about Him, but to know Him personally, *Son 1:5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Son 1:6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Son 1:7 **Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:** for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?*

In that intimate Song, we get a sense of our relationship with the beloved. It is not distant, as you would see a king passing you in a crowd, getting your adulation and admiration, but not stopping to speak with you. It is personal, whereby you get to know Him, from the crown of His head to the soles of His feet. You get to know what He likes and does not like, and you feel bad whenever, if ever you fail Him, because He is real to you, not a lifeless statue of a man on a cross, that you in your blind hope worship, because you can see nothing else.

What did the Apostles really think of Jesus what did they know of Him? That is the place that we find ourselves with Him after the third day, and they had something to reflect upon. He spoke to the disciples, according to the angel's words, *"remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again".* At least the angels were listening, even if the disciples were not and had forgotten what was told them, *Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and **the third day he shall rise again.** Luk 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* You have to find Him for yourselves, not through a community, a club, a denomination, a group of disciples, but on your own, and if you had followed those Apostles then, you would have been in the same straits as them, not knowing and thinking that the words about the resurrection being true "were idle tales, and they believed them not".

I read this week in a parish magazine, a comment from a certain Sheila Himsworth, a Methodist who said in an article.

“I do not believe in penal substitution. That is to say I do not believe Jesus was sacrificed on our behalf to placate an angry God for sins we have committed. It simply does not fit with a loving God. Did nor Micah point out that God does not need sacrifice? I will not sing “The wrath of God was satisfied” in a relatively modern hymn, nor, “There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin” in a much older hymn.”

What part of propitiation does she not understand? The fact that such unscriptural raw sewage spouts from her lips and gains credibility in published materials, shows just why following denominations will get you killed forever, If Jesus did not die for us, and the “wrath of God” was not satisfied, then we are dead in our sins. This woman has the same view of the apostles, *Luk 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. Luk 24:11 And **their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.***

That state of affairs did not last for the Apostles, thank goodness, but it does last in the faithless unbelieving diatribe of the denominations.

## 221. What Has Happened? *Luke 24: 12 - 16*

*Luk 24:12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. Luk 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. Luk 24:14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. Luk 24:15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. Luk 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

Peter is in the position of a man who is confronted with certain evidence, and tries to make sense of what has happened, to make a hypothesis from the evidence, yet he must first make certain assumptions as he develops his hypothesis, which are not based on direct evidence, “*he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass*”. The body is not there, fact, but what could explain that? The body could have been stolen by the Jews or Romans, the body could have been taken by aliens, the body could have decomposed, the body could have been eaten by wild animals, the body could have

come back from death, and some of these assumptions might add to make the valid hypothesis.

Further evidence is added by the women who tell Peter that they have seen angels, and the angels said that he would “rise again the third day”. He must take this into his hypothesis, and if you have never seen an angel, you may agree that his hypothesis is wrong, and is no proof of anything. Well, what would you take as proof? Two witnesses, 10 witnesses, 50 witnesses? *1Co 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 1Co 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 1Co 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

It was for them in those days an uncontroversial fact, Jesus had arisen, but for us today it would perhaps demand more proof, like Thomas did, *Joh 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.** The words of Jesus to us are quite plain, we are blessed in believing.*

What we observe is not what we see and in all our “observations” from which we draw our hypotheses and conclusions, we must take this into consideration. Our visual processing can be in error due to many things, *Luk 24:16 But **their eyes were holden** that they should not know him.* It is like the synonyms for “know” which we looked at some time ago, (177. The God of the living *Luke 20: 34 - 40*).

We see the two words used in a verse in John, *Joh 8:55 Yet ye have not known **γινώσκω** him; but I know **εἶδω** him: and if I should say, I know **εἶδω** him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know **εἶδω** him, and keep his saying.* They have no experience of who God is as a person, although facts are before them, but Jesus knows Him as a Person and knows the facts about Him.

It is knowledge gained by experience (**γινώσκω**) as opposed to knowledge of facts (**εἶδω**). In a way, we see through experience and not through facts, and our eyes are held, not allowed to see what is before us. This amazing experience happened

to the young man that was with the prophet Elisha, *2Ki 6:8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.....2Ki 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 2Ki 6:16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 2Ki 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. **And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.** 2Ki 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.*

The young man was not aware of what the prophet Elijah was seeing and there were two realities, one virtual and one absolute. The young man was in a virtual reality, the one he was made to see in this world. It was to all intents real and the events occurring seemed real, but behind this reality was another world, controlling the pictures he was receiving. The prophet “opens” his eyes to the reality, **the absolute reality**, and now he was seeing God’s world. He saw what the prophet saw, a vast army, chariots of fire, and with the Lord directing operations, he asks that the Syrians may go into a virtual reality, other than the young man’s and be blind to the place they were in.

*2Ki 6:19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. **But he led them to Samaria.** 2Ki 6:20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. 2Ki 6:21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? 2Ki 6:22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. 2Ki 6:23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. **So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.***

Contrary to the view that the Lord always does evil to the enemies of Israel, this shows the kindness of God to the enemy, and he feeds them and sends them home.

Then there was the occasion when the angels came to Sodom and changed the reality of the Sodomites, *Gen 19:9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again,*



*This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. Gen 19:10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. Gen 19:11 **And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.** Dr Gill notes,*

The word for "blindness" is only used here and in 2Ki 6:18, and denotes a peculiar sort of blindness; not an entire blindness with respect to every object, but only with regard to that they were intent upon; for otherwise they would not have continued about Lot's house, or fatigued themselves with searching for the door of it, but would rather have been glad to have groped to their own houses as well as they could: and thus it was with the Syrians, when they were smitten at the prayer of Elisha, it was not total, for they could follow the prophet in the way he went and led them, but they could not see their way to the place where they intended to go; and so these men of Sodom could see other objects, but not the door of Lot's house, their heads were so confused, and their imaginations so disturbed as in drunken men; or the medium of the visive (capable of seeing) faculty, the air, so altered, or the form of the object to be seen so changed, that they could not discern it; when they saw the door, it looked like the wall, and that which seemed to them to be the door, proved to be the wall:

We are surrounded by a spiritual battle in the heavenlies, *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* This was not something new, and Daniel had already shown this, *Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.* A war was going on in Babylon which only the angels knew of not men.

Man is an electro-mechanical machine and can be programmed and re-programmed however God should want them to be. The implications of this are far reaching. This judicial blindness is brought about by sin and a disdain for the knowledge of God, *Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom 1:24 Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own***

**hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:** Rom 1:25 *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

The foolishness of the natural man is another cause of blindness, 1Co 2:7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1Co 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ....1Co 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1Co 2:13 Which things also we speak, **not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;** comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Co 2:14 **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** 1Co 2:15 *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.**

This means that all of the body of knowledge which the natural man acquires is suspect, because he has a vital element missing, namely, the Spirit of God, and he will lack discernment which the Spirit gives. This I think extends to Science, Philosophy, Geology, Astronomy, Religion and so on, which are all liable to the machinations of the natural man's mind, to deceit, fraud, lies and the current fashion of beliefs, so that we cannot tell what is the absolute truth, and that my brethren, is why we have to stick very close to the Lord. If the natural men knew what they were doing, "*they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*".

The Psalmist prays and sets us an example, Psa 119:18 *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* We need our eyes opened to the Lord's truth to be able to see the wonders of His law through His eyes, Psa 32:8 ***I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*** Psa 32:9 *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.* I do not think that we are only dealing with religious knowledge but all forms of knowledge because all things are His.

The healing of the blind was only to show that Jesus could heal the inner man of his spiritual blindness, Is 42:6 *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; Isa 42:7 **To open the blind eyes,** to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*

And that is where we meet the other two disciples, on the Emmaus road, talking about the events of the past days, when Jesus comes to them and they do not recognise Him. The disciples, you would have thought, would never forget Him. They had been with Him, but all that time, they didn't know Him at all, *Luk 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

Why was this? What had happened to their "reality", what they thought they knew about Jesus? They didn't know Him at all. They were like all of us who have a knowledge derived from a cursory acquaintance, but they didn't understand that He was the Scripture. It was all about Jesus, from the start in Genesis to the end in Revelation and that shone a different light on His portrait. Up to this point, their eyes were "seized" by God that they should not know Him.

What does this say about the disciples all along? Had their eyes only at this moment been closed to Jesus or was it something that had happened from the first moment that they met with Him? Sometimes I think that we are not following the real Jesus even though we think we are.

## **222. He Should Have Redeemed Israel *Luke 24: 17 - 21***

*Luk 24:17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? Luk 24:18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? Luk 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: Luk 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.*

Did the disciples know the true Jesus? I don't think that they did, and I certainly do not think that Jesus was playing charades with them, they genuinely did not know the person who had come to walk beside them. They were sad and they had hoped that He, Jesus, was the one to have redeemed Israel but that didn't seem likely after

the Romans killed Him. But what did they mean, redeemed Israel, redeemed from what?

We see the word redeem used in this context in the Exodus from Egypt, *Exo 13:11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, Exo 13:12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. Exo 13:13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: **and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.** Exo 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: Exo 13:15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.*

This act of redemption was to remind the people of Israel that God had delivered them from the oppressor. The people by this act became the Lord's people, *2Sa 7:23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom **God went to redeem for a people to himself**, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, **which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?** 2Sa 7:24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.*

It was more than just getting them out from slavery, delivering them from the nation of Egypt, it was delivering them from the gods of Egypt. The miracles or plagues that Moses brought upon the Egyptians, are often left out of the consideration as to why the Egyptians released the Israelites. Some only look to the conclusion of the Miracles, the Passover, not at the events which led up to the Passover, which are a crucial part of the story. The deliverance, the redemption from Egypt started with the calling of Moses at the burning bush, and his miracle working in the presence of the opposition of Pharaoh and the magicians.

The evil practices of the Egyptian magicians had to be overcome by Moses and the God of the Israelites before they would let them go. It was a spiritual battle for the souls of men, *Exo 7:9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. Exo 7:10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his*

*rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Exo 7:11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: **now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.***

The battle between good and evil was on and the Egyptians went head to head with Moses, *Exo 7:11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments..... Exo 7:21 And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. Exo 7:22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: .....Exo 8:7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.....Exo 8:18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.*

Eventually Moses prevailed and the people were sent out of Egypt, God having shown His power over Egypt. Like Jesus, Moses had shown that He worked greater miracles than the Egyptians, and if anyone thinks that Jesus miracles were done just to benefit a few individuals, to show acts of kindness and goodness we must think again. Just as Moses worked miracles for the nation, so did Jesus work miracles for the nation. The Egyptian magicians were not cranks, they had developed a control over the people using various forms of witchcraft, the darks arts, which was ultimately service to the devil. The powers of darkness headed by satan, were controlling Egypt and must be broken. It was a type of the work of Jesus.

John gives us an overview of the evil in the world, *Rev 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. Rev 16:14 **For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.* We might think this was primitive thinking from the days when man believed in evil spirits and superstition but you would be wrong. The magicians are still amongst us, controlling us, and doing harm to us, and evil is a very present reality in this world, and mankind is led to do the most stupid and injurious things to himself. The dictators who have slain so many people in the last century have all had occult tendencies, people like Hitler and the Nazis, Stalin and the seemingly innocuous Ronald Reagan. But I will not dwell on that for now.

Moses was a redeemer of his people, *Act 7:35 This Moses, **whom they denied**, saying, Who appointed you a ruler and a judge, this one God has sent as ruler and redeemer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the Bush.* LITV. This term "redeemer", the person, is ultimately shown to be Jehovah, God, and receives

a lot of coverage in the book of Isaiah, *Isa 44:6 So says Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his **Redeemer**, Jehovah of Hosts: I am the First, and I am the Last; and there is no God except Me. .... Isa 44:24 So says Jehovah, **your Redeemer** and your Former from the womb; **I am Jehovah who makes all things; stretching out the heavens, I alone spreading out the heavens.** Who was with Me, Isa 44:25 frustrating the signs of liars; yea, He makes divining ones mad, turning wise ones backward, and making their knowledge foolish..... Isa 49:6 And He said, It is too little that You should be **My servant** to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You for a light of the nations,** that You may be **My salvation to the end of the earth.** Isa 49:7 So says Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, His Holy One, to the despised of soul, to the hated of the nation, the servant of rulers, Kings shall see and rise up; and chiefs shall worship; because of Jehovah who is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel; and He chose You..... Isa 49:26 And those who oppress you, I will feed with their own flesh: and they shall be drunk by their own blood, as with fresh wine. **And all flesh shall know that I Jehovah am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.** LITV.*

These are just a few of the verses, and these show the Redeemer as Creator, Servant and Saviour. I will suggest to you that Moses took upon himself the mantle of Jehovah Jesus and was by his actions showing the person of God to the Earthly people of Israel. He was introducing God to the people of Israel in a type. It was just as God introduced worship in the form of the Tabernacle, as a type of worship in Christ. It was just as God introduced the Law of Moses as a type of the Law of Christ. All these things were shadows of Christ, *Col 2:16 Don't let anyone tell you what you must eat or drink. Don't let them say that you must celebrate the New Moon festival, the Sabbath, or any other festival. Col 2:17 These things are only a shadow of what was to come. But Christ is real!* Christ is the reality.

It wasn't getting the children of Israel out of Egypt that was the difficulty, as one commentator has said, it was getting Egypt out of the Israelites. We might change that slightly but with the same meaning to, "It wasn't getting Israel out of the world it was getting the world out of Israel". They failed to fully obey God. This was a regular occurrence during the time of the Judges when they cycled between oppression and deliverance.

It is unfortunate that the KJV is not reliable in the translation of the word **יִשׁוּעַ** which means deliverer or saviour, and so we do not see the frequency of the word as it is not rendered consistently. You know this word, it is where the name Joshua, Jesus, comes from **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ , יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** which means Jehovah Saves, and the word is used in Exodus to describe the salvation of the people, *Exo 14:29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them*

*on their right hand, and on their left. Exo 14:30 Thus the LORD **saved** Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. .*

*In the time of Judges there were a lot of saviours, Jdg 2:16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered (saved נָצַח) them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. Jdg 2:17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.*

The major judges are Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. The minor judges are Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. They all saved Israel. We like to see those men and women as Bible stories, which make very good sermons about strong people who trusted in God and overcame difficulties and delivered God's people into the bargain. But the truth is that they were much more, they were types of Christ, saving each generation of Israel from themselves.

Israel had been bitten by the snake and sin had entered into the veins of every one of them. It was like a genetic disease which affected each generation, and in each generation they needed saving. It was no use crying that they had Abraham for their father, for he was as much bitten by sin as they were.

Even though Israel had been redeemed, had been delivered from Egypt, saved by going through the Red sea, the people who were supposed to be a holy people, were not a Holy people, and in a short time, sin bubbled up in them, and scarce were they "saved", they made a brass cow, and were on their way worshipping it and falling down to it, as if it was their deliverer. Then when they entered the land of promise, they broke their promises to serve God, and were off with the god's of the land, but God stuck with them and gave them the Judges.

*Heb 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; Deborah, the Judge is not mentioned here though she was a judge, Jdg 4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. Is this because she was married to Barak who is mentioned?*

Stephen gives a remarkable summary of the Nation of Israel,

*Act 7:22 Moses was given the best education in Egypt. He was a strong man and a powerful speaker. Act 7:23 When Moses was forty years old, he wanted to help the Israelites because they were his own people. Act 7:24 One day he saw an Egyptian*

*mistreating one of them. So he rescued the man and killed the Egyptian. Act 7:25 Moses thought the rest of his people would realize that God was going to use him to set them free. But they didn't understand. Act 7:26 The next day Moses saw two of his own people fighting, and he tried to make them stop. He said, "Men, you are both Israelites. Why are you so cruel to each other?" Act 7:27 But the man who had started the fight pushed Moses aside and asked, "Who made you our ruler and judge? Act 7:28 Are you going to kill me, just as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?" .....Act 7:35 This was the same Moses that the people rejected by saying, "Who made you our leader and judge?" God's angel had spoken to Moses from the bush. And God had even sent the angel to help Moses rescue the people and be their leader. Act 7:36 In Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the desert, Moses rescued the people by working miracles and wonders for forty years. Act 7:37 Moses is the one who told the people of Israel, "God will choose one of your people to be a prophet, just as he chose me." Act 7:38 Moses brought our people together in the desert, and the angel spoke to him on Mount Sinai. There he was given these life-giving words to pass on to us. Act 7:39 But our ancestors refused to obey Moses. They rejected him and wanted to go back to Egypt. Act 7:40 The people said to Aaron, "Make some gods to lead us! Moses led us out of Egypt, but we don't know what's happened to him now." Act 7:41 Then they made an idol in the shape of a calf. They offered sacrifices to the idol and were pleased with what they had done.*

Just as when Moses “disappeared” for a short time, Jesus also disappeared for a short while, and the disciples just went their own way, *Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.* More correctly it says, hoped, *Luk 24:21 We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.* CEV.

The hope of Israel, *Jer 14:8 O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Jer 14:9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.* Jesus was with them but they could not see the **hope of Israel**.



## 223. He Should Have Redeemed Israel *Luke 24: 17 - 21 Cont....*

*Luk 24:17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? Luk 24:18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? Luk 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: Luk 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.*

We continue to think about the subject of the Redeemer and His relationship to the people of Israel. The idea of redemption and the redeemer gradually came in to focus and we saw that it was Jehovah God who was the ultimate redeemer of Israel. Sin had to be dealt with as well, in order to be redeemed, but I think that the people of Israel had viewed redemption as a right and sin as collateral damage that could easily be swept aside. They had lost sight of the fact that they were no different to other men and there but for the grace of God go "they".

After all, they had Abraham as their Father and that put them above the rest of men, so they thought, *Joh 8:39 The people said to Jesus, "Abraham is our father!" Jesus replied, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did. Joh 8:40 Instead, you want to kill me for telling you the truth that God gave me. Abraham never did anything like that. Joh 8:41 But you are doing exactly what your father does." "Don't accuse us of having someone else as our father!" they said. "We just have one father, and he is God." Joh 8:42 **Jesus answered: If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and only from him. He sent me. I did not come on my own.** CEV. The fact that they were children of the flesh and not the Spirit, did not occur to them, and this earthly condition appeared no obstacle to a relationship with God, in their mind.*

So it must have come as a shock when John the Baptist began preaching against sin, *Mat 3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Mat 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: Mat 3:9 And **think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto***

**Abraham.** *Mat 3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

John came to prepare the way to Jesus and he was not making it easy, he was not taking any prisoners, and he was most obnoxious to the poor Pharisees and Sadducees, who he called vipers. There was advice to all manner of men and women, but the most important was “*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*”. John was not after saving Israelites in their present condition of sin and he demanded that they change their ways or they would not be accepted.

The Israelites thought that if they just did the things written in Moses, the works of the Law, unthinkingly as men say the Apostles creed, almost on autopilot, as long as they did them they were alright and they could do what they liked with the rest of their time. You didn’t have to think about the Laws much, you just blindly pressed on more in hope than certainty. The religion of the Jews had become a mask of service, and the Temple worship with its trade and money changers had seen to that.

Did the people of Israel need a Redeemer, a Messiah, a Saviour, for they were doing very well thank you, with the status quo. John the Baptist was a fanatic and Jesus was upsetting the apple cart, and if they were not careful, they would lose it all, *Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, **that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.***

The “whole nation” seemed to have forgotten that they were sinners. John came preaching repentance from their sins, so he thought they were sinners even if they didn’t. Jesus took up the baton of John, *Mat 9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Mat 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* The people thought that they were all going to heaven in spite of their ways..... *Mat 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, Mat 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their*

*heart is far from me. Mat 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

In the film Total Recall, there is scene where the hero, Doug Quaid, goes to the Rekall Corporation for a memory implant, giving him a virtual holiday, which is a cheaper way to have a holiday than actually going to a place. A part of the dialogue, where Doug first goes to Rekall and makes enquiries about the implant, goes like this,

“Whatever you say, just answer one question. What is it that is exactly the same about every vacation you've ever taken? I give up, says Doug. You, says the salesperson, You're the same. No matter where you go, there you are. Always the same old you”.

“Always the same old you”. You take a man that you have just created and put him in a perfect place, the Garden of Eden, and what does he do? He trashes it, and the owner of the place is completely ignored as far as His code of conduct goes. You finally get fed up with the man and his descendants and so you decide enough is enough and decide to kill them all. One man and his family seem as if they are good and so you decide to save them from the terrible Judgement you are going to bring, and you give the man plans to build a box, an ark, that will save them. The man and his family emerge into a sparkling new world, but they have bought sin with them. “Always the same old you”.

Wherever you take man you take sin and it follows him around like a dog follows his master. You give the man instruction to get out of Egypt, which he does, but he takes his dog with him. You give the man a place for worship and tell him how you want things done, but his dog lifts his leg on the side of your building and the people have no respect for the designer because sin is so deeply rooted within them. Again it is a repeat performance and you sling the man out of the country you loaned him, and send him into exile, *2Ch 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 2Ch 30:8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. 2Ch 30:9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.*

Stephen sums up the progress of Israel, *Act 7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Act 7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things? Act 7:51 **Ye stiffnecked***

**and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.** Act 7:52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Act 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. “Always the same old you”,* might well be their epitaph.

Which leads me back to the question that we have been answering, in case you have missed the point, *Luk 24:21 But **we hoped that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:** and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.* I think that the people wanted redemption from their oppressors and this was their hope. Its like when we pray, “deliver us from evil”, what we mean is keep us safe, not keep us from sinning against You. We think that there is nothing wrong with us, its “them” out there who are the sinners, and we are the righteous of the Lord, and we need delivering, not even thinking for a moment that we have the cancer of sin in us, not seeing that it is WE who need saving. We don’t think of doing anything for ourselves but simply keep crying out to God.

Andrew Perriman makes a very apposite comment on this disappointment to the disciples on the Emmaus road,

The usual assumption is that the only alternative was violent rebellion against Roman after the pattern, perhaps, of the successful Maccabean revolt. But it seems to me rather unlikely that Jesus’ disciples—for all their obtuseness—imagined that their master was planning to foment an insurrection in the manner of Barabbas (Lk. 23:18-19). Two swords would hardly be enough (Lk. 22:38).

So was there a third option, somewhere between the two violent extremes of substitutionary atonement and a desperate war against Rome? What did the disciples think plan A was?

That the Christ should suffer and enter into his glory sounds to me like an allusion to Daniel, *Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. Dan 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* (cf. Lk. 24:6-7).

This seems to be confirmed by the words of the angels to the women at the empty tomb: *“Remember how he told you... that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise”* (Lk. 24:6-7). It is, therefore, a question of how Jesus would acquire “dominion and glory and a kingdom” and the obeisance of “all peoples, nations, and languages” (Dan. 7:14). Jesus would receive rule over Israel, among the nations, through the suffering inflicted on him—by apostate Israel and the foreign occupying force—as a figure equivalent to Daniel’s “one like a son of man.”

The Davidic kingship theme is firmly anticipated in the infancy stories (Lk. 1:27, 32, 69; 2:11) and in the response of the blind beggar shortly before the entry into Jerusalem: “Son of David, have mercy on me” (Lk. 18:39).

A large crowd of his disciples acclaims him as “the King who comes in the name of the Lord,” as they approach Jerusalem. This is a dramatic, carefully staged re-enactment of Zechariah’s prophecy of the arrival in Zion of Israel’s king, riding a beast of burden, “righteous and having salvation” (Lk. 19:28-40; Zech. 9:9-10). He can enter the city in all vulnerability because YHWH has disarmed the enemy.

Perhaps, then, the larger group of followers believed that they were genuinely celebrating the arrival of a peaceful king, whose authority and status as a son of David would soon—in the coming weeks and months—be acknowledged by the leadership and the people. On the strength of his teaching, his wisdom, his prophetic insight, the signs and wonder which he performed, the exercise of justice, the sheer force of character, he would win the city over.

Herod Antipas would be deposed, perhaps many of the current leadership would be cast into outer darkness, where there would be wailing and gnashing of teeth, but it would essentially be a bloodless coup.

The model for Jesus as the one who would “redeem” (lytrousthai) Israel, when usually it is Jehovah who redeems his people, is Moses, who was sent by God “as both ruler and redeemer (lutrōtēn) by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush,” who likewise performed “wonders and signs,” but who also was rejected by his people (Acts 7:35-40). Jesus was the “prophet like Moses.” The “wonders and signs” expression rather suggests, I think, that the equivalent to the plagues of Egypt was the miracles performed by Jesus, as evidence that the satanic

force behind the political-religious crisis had been disarmed (Lk. 11:20-22; Acts 2:22).

This redeeming king would then lead his people towards righteousness and peace. There would be a mass movement of repentance and baptism, perhaps with an outpouring of the Spirit and a renewal of the covenant. The movement of reform started by John the Baptist would come to fulfilment. And so extraordinary would be the transformation that the Gentiles would sit up and take notice. The Roman governor would report back to Caesar that Judea was no longer the hotbed of radicalism and militancy that had necessitated Rome's presence in the city. The garrison would be withdrawn. Weapons would be beaten into agricultural implements.

Diaspora Jews would return to Judea. A glorious new age for Israel would dawn.

The nations would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem, bringing tribute, thronging the massive courtyard of the nations. The sacrificial system would continue according to the Law, now operated by a reformed priesthood. More importantly Herod's spectacular and unshakable temple would now at last be known as a house of prayer for all nations, as it should always have been (cf. Lk. 19:45-46). Some gentiles, no doubt, would become priests.

King Jesus would take up residence in the royal palace, but he would live humbly among his subjects, accessible, compassionate, incorruptible, teaching his people, showing his people, how to walk in the ways of their God all the days of their life.

Things didn't turn out that way, of course, and the disciples ended up with plan B, which took a little getting used to.

The disciple's thinking was off beam, whatever they believed, and they were looking in the wrong direction. Jesus will correct them.

## **224. Emmaus *Luke 24: 22 - 27***

*Luk 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; Luk 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was*

*alive. Luk 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Luk 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Luk 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

The fact that the disciples hadn't much of a clue about the Mission of Jesus, leads us to question "How did the disciples view King Jesus?" I think that they saw Him as an OT Prophet, a Messiah, a miracle worker, a King, but of this world, and the King of the Kingdom. The exact phrase "kingdom of God" does not show up in the Old Testament although "kingdom of the Lord" does appear in *2Ch 13:8 And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.*

The kingdom of Heaven or kingdom of God, which is the same thing, was a statement of God's ownership over the people. God was Sovereign over Israel, He was their King, until He was deposed, *1Sa 8:6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 1Sa 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for **they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.** 1Sa 8:8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 1Sa 8:9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.*

Israel was the Kingdom of God, until man got his dirty hands on it and soon it became like all the other nations. Originally this not so, *2Sa 7:23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?*

I think that the disciples saw Jesus as reclaiming the kingdom, *Mat 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* We speculated how Jesus might achieve this last time, from an earthly perspective, and that's where I believe the disciples went wrong on their assumption about King Jesus the

Redeemer. They just hadn't realised the scope or method of achieving His Kingdom, and as a result they were disappointed, *Pro 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*

The result of their misapprehension led to their surprise at the recent events concerning Jesus, as the two men on the Emmaus road relate, *Luk 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us **astonished**, which were early at the sepulchre; Luk 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. Luk 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.*

The stranger, who is Jesus, but not recognised as Jesus, who had joined the men on the Emmaus road, having heard what they said, turns to them with a question, *Luk 24:25 Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said? Luk 24:26 Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?"* CEV. They fail to recognise Him on the Emmaus road, as much as they failed to recognise Him before He was executed. They do not recognise who the person is that is speaking to them, even after He gives them a lesson on the Christ.

We learn by this that the teachings themselves do not give the disciples recognition of who He is. You can learn all that there is to know about the king of England without ever having met him, without ever have experienced him as a person. The disciples had certainly seen Jesus in the flesh but I think that they had not seen Him in the Spirit, and this was lacking in their lives. They were as Jesus observed slow to believe, they had dull hearts and they need teaching. Even after this encounter, and after being shown the things that concerned Jesus throughout scripture, the disciples' eyes were not opened. The Emmaus road experience, if I may call it that, did not correct their vision, the disciples still did not recognise Jesus. That came later.

The disciples were slow of heart and they should have known what the prophets said, "Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" The suffering of the Messiah was a necessary step that He must take before receiving His glory. The disciples had not read the script properly, *Luk 24:27 And **beginning at Moses and all the prophets**, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

I wonder what Jesus spoke about on the Emmaus road. It was a relatively short journey to Emmaus, *Luk 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem **about threescore***



**furlongs.** That's about 7½ miles or 12 kilometres, from where I am speaking, it is to Wokingham and back again to Bracknell, about 3 hours of walking. That is not long for an exposition of Jesus, and it would have been wonderful to hear Him. Just why they were going to Emmaus is not recorded, so why even mention the town's name? I will make a short digression on Emmaus.

Emmaus is spoken of in the book of the Maccabees, and the battle of Emmaus was a famous battle and a famous victory for Israel in the Old Testament period, and it is nearly always left out of the Old Testament battles, the list normally ending up with the fall of Jerusalem. Why? I don't think that people really believe that Israel existed from the exile and that history virtually stopped, from the period of the captivity. But it did not, and although Israel was depleted it carried on, and this is born witness to by such worthies as Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist, Jesus and all of the Jews that He spoke to, *Mat 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

We left the books of the Maccabees out of the protestant canon of the Bible, Jerome and Augustine of Hippo (c. 397 AD) had seemingly inconsistent positions: they directly excluded 2 Maccabees from canon, but did say that the book was useful; yet in other works, both cited 2 Maccabees as if it was scripture, or lists it among scriptural works. It took them 300 years to come to this decision. The apocryphal also called the Deutero-canonical books, the books forming a second canon, were originally included in the King James Bible, in the Apocrypha and early Protestant editions of the Bible (notably the Luther Bible in German and 1611 King James Version in English). They did not omit these books, but placed them in a separate Apocryphal section in between the Old and New Testaments, to indicate their status. They obviously thought they had some value.

Do you take the book of Maccabees as having historical value or not? Its up to you. The so called experts and KJV supporters say no, but you are under no obligation to follow a non-inspired man who makes himself an arbiter of the Scriptures. A man is not inspired and you are allowing him to make the decision for you. You stand before God on your own, on the last day, so you make up your mind as to the value of a Bible book. You should not be afraid of doing this.

Am I a heretic for even suggesting this? You show me what, in Christ is heresy, before you start bandying that term about. You have to show that God taught contrary to it.

The history of the Jews about this time is as follows. The Seleucids, like the Ptolemies before them, held a suzerainty, a part control, over Judea: they respected

Jewish culture and protected Jewish institutions. This policy was drastically reversed by Antiochus IV, seemingly after what was either a dispute over leadership of the Temple in Jerusalem and the office of High Priest, or possibly a revolt whose nature was lost to time after being crushed. Antiochus issued decrees forbidding many traditional Jewish practices and began a campaign of persecution against devout Jews.

Swine were strictly unclean to Jews, but Diodorus wrote, Antiochus "sacrificed a great swine at the image of Moses, and at the altar of God that stood in the outward court, and sprinkled them with the blood of the sacrifice. He commanded likewise that the books, by which they were taught to hate all other nations, should be sprinkled with the broth made of the swine's flesh. And he put out the lamp (called by them immortal) which burns continually in the temple. Lastly he forced the high priest and the other Jews to eat swine's flesh" (Diodorus 34:1(4)). Such steps triggered a revolt against his rule, the Maccabean Revolt. Scholars of Second Temple Judaism therefore sometimes refer to Antiochus' reign as the 'Antiochene crises' for the Jews. These decrees were a departure from typical Seleucid practice, which did not attempt to suppress local religions in their empire.

The book of Maccabees gives an account of the battle of Emmaus, and was a turning point for the nation in that it became liberated for over a hundred years, especially from those who committed sacrilege on their Temple worship. The main phase of the revolt lasted from 167–160 B.C. and ended with the Seleucids in control of Judea, but conflict between the Maccabees, Hellenized Jews, and the Seleucids continued until 134 B.C. with the Maccabees eventually attaining independence. The Battle of Emmaus took place around September 165 BC during the Maccabean Revolt between Judean rebels, led by Judas Maccabeus (Judah Maccabee), and an expedition of Seleucid Empire forces under generals Gorgias, Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor near Emmaus.

The Syrians were so sure of victory that they took with them a number of merchants, to whom they intended to sell the Jewish prisoners as slaves. The Syrians camped at Emmaus; and Gorgias was sent thence with 5,000 infantry and 1,000 Cavalry to attack Judas by night (1 Macc 4:1-24), his guides being treacherous Jews. Judas had been informed of the expedition, and attacked the main Syrian army at Emmaus, completely routing it. Gorgias, not finding the enemy in camp, concluded they had retired into the mountains, and went in pursuit of them. Judas sagaciously kept his men from touching the booty, preparing them for the impending battle with Gorgias. When the latter returned to the main camp, he found it in flames, and the Jews ready for battle. The Syrians, seized with panic, fled into the Philistine territory, and only then did the Jews seize the rich spoils. The

victory was all the more striking as the force of Judas was considerably smaller in number and had "not armour nor swords to their minds" (1 Macc 4:6).

We can read the account from the first book of Maccabees, chapter 4,

**4** Gorgias took five thousand infantry and one thousand select cavalry, and this division moved out secretly at night. <sup>2</sup>He wanted to come to the Jewish camp and attack without warning. Men from the elevated fortress served as his guides. <sup>3</sup>But Judas heard about it, and he and his warriors moved out to attack the king's forces in Emmaus <sup>4</sup>while the division was absent from the camp. <sup>5</sup>So when Gorgias entered Judas' camp during the night, there was no one there. He started looking for them in the hills, because he said, "These men are running away from us."

<sup>6</sup>At daybreak, Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men. But they didn't have armor and swords such as they would have liked. <sup>7</sup>They saw the Gentile camp, strongly fortified, surrounded by cavalry clearly trained in warfare. <sup>8</sup>Judas said to those who were with him: "Don't fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. <sup>9</sup>Remember how our ancestors were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was pursuing them with his forces. <sup>10</sup>So let's cry to heaven to see if the heavenly one will favor us and remember his covenant with our ancestors and crush this army in front of us today. <sup>11</sup>Then all the Gentiles will know that there is someone who redeems and saves Israel."

<sup>12</sup>The foreigners looked up and saw the Israelites coming against them. <sup>13</sup>They went out from their camp to engage them in battle. The men with Judas blew their trumpets, and the battle began. <sup>14</sup>The Gentiles were crushed and fled into the plain. <sup>15</sup>All those who were in the rear were killed by the sword. The Israelites pursued them to Gazara, to the plains of Idumea, and to Azotus and Jamnia. Three thousand Gentiles died. <sup>16</sup>Judas and his forces stopped pursuing them. <sup>17</sup>He said to everyone: "Don't be greedy to plunder, for there is still a battle ahead of us. <sup>18</sup>Gorgias and his force are still near us in the hills. Stand now against our enemies and fight them. Then afterward boldly seize the spoils."

<sup>19</sup>Just as Judas said this, a detachment of Gentiles cautiously appeared, coming out of the hills. <sup>20</sup>They saw that their army had been put to flight and that the Jews were burning the camp, as evident from the smoke over the area. <sup>21</sup>When they saw the devastation and noticed Judas' army in the plain ready for battle, they were terrified. <sup>22</sup>They ran away into the land of the Philistines. <sup>23</sup>So Judas went back to plunder the camp. His army took a

great amount of gold and silver, cloth that was dyed blue and purple, and great riches. <sup>24</sup> As they returned, they sang hymns and songs of praise to heaven: "God is good, because his mercy endures forever." <sup>25</sup> That day Israel had a great deliverance.....

### **Cleansing and dedication of the temple**

<sup>36</sup> At that time Judas and his brothers said, "Look, our enemies have been crushed. Let's go up to cleanse and rededicate the sanctuary." <sup>37</sup> All the army gathered together and went up to Mount Zion. <sup>38</sup> They found the sanctuary deserted, the altar treated with disrespect, and the gates burned. In the courts, bushes had sprung up like in an open field or on one of the mountains. They saw that the priests' chambers were in ruins as well. <sup>39</sup> So they tore their clothes and mourned with great sorrow. They sprinkled their heads with ashes <sup>40</sup> and fell facedown on the ground. When the trumpets sounded a signal, they cried out to heaven.

<sup>41</sup> Then Judas chose some soldiers to fight against those stationed in the elevated fortress until he completed cleansing the sanctuary. <sup>42</sup> He selected priests who were blameless and devoted to the Law. <sup>43</sup> They cleansed the sanctuary and took the polluted stones to a ritually unclean place. <sup>44</sup> They discussed what to do about the altar for entirely burned offerings, since it had been polluted. <sup>45</sup> They decided it was best to tear it down so that it wouldn't be a lasting shameful reminder to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar. <sup>46</sup> They stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple mount until a prophet should arise who could say what to do with them. <sup>47</sup> They then took unfinished stones, in keeping with the Law, and built a new altar like the former one.

<sup>48</sup> They also restored the sanctuary and the temple interior, and dedicated the courtyards. <sup>49</sup> They fashioned new holy equipment and brought the lampstand, the incense altar, and the table into the temple. <sup>50</sup> Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, which illuminated the temple. <sup>51</sup> They placed bread on the table and hung curtains. Finally, they completed all the work that they had started.

<sup>52</sup> They rose early in the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev. <sup>[b]</sup> It was the year 148. <sup>53</sup> They offered sacrifice, following the Law, on the new altar for entirely burned offerings that they had made. <sup>54</sup> In the very season, on the exact day that the Gentiles had polluted it, it was dedicated with songs, harps, lutes, and cymbals. <sup>55</sup> All the people bowed to the ground and worshipped and blessed heaven, which had given them success.

<sup>56</sup> So they celebrated the rededication of the altar for eight days and joyfully made entirely burned offerings. They offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. <sup>57</sup> They decorated the front of the temple with gold crowns and small shields. They restored the gates and the priests' chambers, furnishing them with doors. <sup>58</sup> The people were extremely glad, and the disgrace the Gentiles brought was lifted.

We continue the story in the next chapter.

## **225. Exposition of Himself *Luke 24: 22 - 27***

*Luk 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; Luk 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. Luk 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Luk 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Luk 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

As we saw in the history of the Maccabees, there was something of a revival, a Jewish revival at that time. They had won back their country from the foreign invaders and they celebrated with the Feast of Hanukkah, the Feast of Lights. Its not one of the major feasts put forth in the Torah and there are no references to it in the writings of the Prophets. It is a feast of dedication, remembering the brave Maccabees who recaptured the temple from Antiochus Epiphanus after it had been captured and desecrated more than 150 years before Jesus was born.

Ancient writings tell us that the eight-day re-dedication requirement seemed impossible, having only one day's supply of oil for the temple menorah. Tradition tells us that God miraculously allowed the oil to last the full eight days so that the dedication would be complete. The word "Hanukkah" means dedication and is celebrated *each year as the Feast of Dedication or the Festival of Lights. Jesus walked in the Temple at this feast, Joh 10:22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. Joh 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.*

The Maccabees were deliverers, and Jesus' disciples were familiar with this, and those who probably lived in Emmaus, were more familiar than others, and looked forward to another revival under Jesus. There were similarities between Judas Maccabeus and Jesus' cleansing the Jewish Temple in order to restore it to its former function after the Seleucid King had defiled it. It was déjà vu for the disciples, they thought that Jesus would have done the same again, and Israel would once again be a great theocracy, *Luk 24:21 But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel. And now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.* DRB.

But things were not going well. The Maccabees was all past tense, and they were now on a new road, soon returning to Jerusalem from Emmaus, to the resurrection of Jesus. That I think is why Luke draws our attention to Emmaus. And do not forget, these men were not Christians, they were Jews, and their traditions and world views shaped their thinking. We often, misguidedly see the disciples, living in the Old Testament times as being like us today, but they were not. It takes a change in world view, the Spirit of God, and Pentecost to change their thinking.

Jews who clung to the Law, like the ones who reject Jesus the Messiah, still go on vainly looking for Him.

On the road Jesus corrects their view of Himself although they do not recognise him. What He told them must have covered what you good Bibliophiles now take for granted, but for those disciples it was fresh and new. I remember in the early days of reading the Scriptures, after I became a Christian, that the things of Christ in the OT were hidden from my eyes too. Thinking back, I saw the teachings of Jesus as being very much about what you should do and what you should not do. It was the history of the church, it was about the Apostles, it was about conduct in the Church, and very little of Christ who stood as a small figure in the background.

If I had seriously looked into this very verse when I came to Jesus, I would have saved so much time, because I was not looking in the right direction either, *Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* What the Scriptures are about is Jesus, from start to finish. Jesus is the Bible and it is all about Him and His interactions with man. Jesus is the ONLY Saviour of Mankind, Jesus is the Law, Jesus is the sacrifices, Jesus is the Temple, Jesus is the Creator, Jesus is Wisdom, The Lord Jesus Christ alone has the right to occupy the foremost place in human experience. There is only one person in the whole of God's universe who has the absolute right to occupy the first place in your life and mine.

The disciples started out on the road to Emmaus as Jews, then returned to Jerusalem as “almost Christians”, almost believers. Surely, there cannot be a great difference between the Christian and the Jew? Let us explore that subject.

The Christians believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, but the Jews have not only accepted the Hebrew Scripture as God’s divinely inspired Word, but the Jews do not limit God’s truth to these writings alone. Along with the written Scripture, the Jews have a long history of non-written, or “oral tradition.” This unwritten tradition deals with all aspects of Jewish belief and practice. From the books of Moses, the Jews have derived rules for daily life. This is known as the halakah which literally means “way of life.” This has become the main source for their beliefs.

The unwritten traditions were later put into writing. They are known as the Talmud, the Mishnah, and the Tosefta. The Talmud, which in its written form comes from the third century A.D. is the comprehensive term for the Mishnah. It is divided into sixty-three parts, or tractates, and consists of customs, proverbs, and folklore. To many Jewish people, these written traditions are given the same authority as the written Word of God, the Hebrew Scriptures.

This brings us to another difference between Judaism and Protestant Christianity. The traditions and teachings of the Jewish people now have equal value with the Scripture. The Jews believe that the entire revelation of God to humanity is not limited to one book. Unwritten tradition has always been a means to interpret and apply Scripture. Thus, the oral law was assumed to have the same authority as the written law.

We find this belief among those who opposed Jesus. We read about this when Jesus confronted the Pharisees. Matthew says, *Mat 15:2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. Mat 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Mat 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. Mat 15:5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;*

The Jews broke the Laws of God continually by referring to their traditions over the Scripture, and as a result of putting tradition on an equal level with Scripture, the Scripture was not the final authority where matters of belief and practice were settled. To the contrary, the Scripture is looked at as the foundation of truth, but the written traditions have become as authoritative as, or more authoritative than,

written Scripture. This is a major distinction between the Jewish view of where authority rests and the Protestant position.

Why did they rely so much on the oral, or spoken tradition, over the written Scriptures? I think it is because the law was so vague over some issues or made no comment on them. Laws of washing were given, *Lev 15:1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, Lev 15:2 "Tell the Israelites: If a man has a discharge from his penis, his discharge is unclean. Lev 15:3 He is unclean because of the discharge from his penis. Whether it is chronic or not makes no difference; he is still unclean. Lev 15:4 "The man who has a discharge makes everything he lies on or sits on unclean. Lev 15:5 Those who touch his bed must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening. Lev 15:6 Those who sit on anything he sat on must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening. Lev 15:7 Those who touch a man who has a discharge must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.*

This is known as "contractual defilement", where you got dirty from touching somebody else who was declared religiously dirty. So if you touched a dead body, you could make somebody else unclean by touching them, and so you could pass on uncleanness. But, and this is the point, there was no general rule about washing your hands when eating. To be fair to the Pharisees, they probably developed the teaching from thinking that they could be defiled by a person that could have been unclean and not told them, and this was a "fail safe" method of keeping ritually clean. But it became their law instead of a good idea. The Pharisees had many other ideas like this, and it formed a major part of Jesus' conflict with them.

The reason for the difference between Jesus and the Jews, lay in Jesus' testimony. The OT could not be correctly understood apart from Christ. This is what divided the Christians from the Jews. While each believed in the Divine origin of the Old Testament, the Christians saw it teaching about Jesus, while the Jews did not. Jesus claimed that the Old Testament was all about Him. He said to the religious leaders of His day, *Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. Joh 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

The disciples were no better than the Pharisees, the disciples were Jews, brought up in the synagogues of Galilee, they were familiar with the teaching of the Pharisees, they had hard hearts because they were under law, and they would bring down fire from heaven upon those who did not receive them, they thought an easy divorce for any reason to be part of the law, and they didn't believe Him when He stilled the waves, *Mar 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Mar 4:40 And he*



*said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? **They didn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead because of their hard hearts,** Mar 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, **and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart,** because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

What would make the disciples believe? Certainly not an exposition of Jesus in scripture, even by the Master Himself. Changing the hard heart does not occur through more knowledge, even if the knowledge is about Jesus from the beginning of the sacred writings, *Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: **for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.***

Peter and the disciples had not got a clue about the Parables. When Jesus said, *Mat 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. Mat 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: Mat 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and **should be converted,** and I should heal them.* Jesus was saying that unless you were converted you would not understand the parables.

But the next minute we see that the disciples do NOT understand the parables because they ask Him the meaning, *Luk 8:9 **His disciples asked Jesus what this parable meant,** Luk 8:10 and he answered, "The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of God has been given to you, but to the rest it comes by means of parables, so that they may look but not see, and listen but not understand. Luk 8:11 "This is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God.* GNB. If the disciples could not understand the meaning of this parable they did not know the meaning of any parable, *Mar 4:13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and **how then will ye know all parables? The disciples were not yet converted.***

As we said before, I can know lots of facts and doctrines about Jesus but not know him personally, and the disciples were lacking this personal knowledge. A bit later on we read, *Luk 24:45 **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scripture.*** GNB. All this time, all the while from the day that He called them and taught them, through the signs and wonders He did, through the days before the crucifixion, even here on the Emmaus road with more knowledge than they could

handle, having explained everything about himself from Genesis to Malachi, they still had a closed mind to the person of Jesus. Until He opens their mind they will not understand the Scripture or Jesus.

Think about what I am saying to that closed mind, taking in knowledge, feeding on knowledge, and it will become puffed up, and they will not find Christ, *1Co 8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 1Co 8:3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.* I think that this “mind opening” is in reality conversion. Not some emotional experience at a campaign or crusade, but a genuine coming to term with Jesus and seeing Him for who He is.

I thought that I was doing the right thing when I became a “Christian” and devoted myself to learning. I liked reading Systematic Theology, Biblical Theology, Historical Theology, Dogmatic Theology, and books on the church, countless commentaries, languages, word studies and endless dictionaries, all in the hope that as I got more knowledge I would become a better Christian. Let me tell you that is an illusion, I did not become better I became a Pharisee. The Bible says, *Pro 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

Don’t get me wrong, study is essential, but study must be directed, *2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* That is a whole different way of getting knowledge. You are always looking for approval from God not man. You study for God not man. You pray for understanding, but most of all that your mind might be opened to see the truth of what you read, *Psa 119:18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

The true meaning of the Old Testament is only understood by those who believe in Jesus, whose minds are unlocked to receive the truth and that my friends is not your work but God’s work.

## 226. Abide With Us *Luke 24: 28 - 31*

*Luk 24:28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. Luk 24:29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. Luk 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. Luk 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.*

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You probably know that they sing “Abide with Me” at every cup FA cup final at Wembley, before the teams appear on the pitch. The band strikes up and the crowd all sing along, but why do they do this and when did it start? David Mitchell will enlighten us,

Henry Francis Lyte was born in Kelso, Scotland, in 1793. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, where he won the prize for English poetry three times. He became an Anglican priest in June 1815—the month of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo—and he ministered in towns in Ireland and West England.

In the course of his pastoral duties, in 1820, he visited the deathbed of an older priest, Augustus le Hunte. The dying man spoke of his great regret of not having taken the letters of St Paul **‘in their plain and literal sense’ and impressed on Lyte the need to do so.** Later, the dying man, in his last earthly moments, kept repeating the words, ‘Abide with me’. His words made a deep impression on Lyte and led to his evangelical conversion. But he did not write ‘Abide With Me’ at that time. For, although Lyte published three volumes of poetry over the next fifteen years no poem resembling ‘Abide With Me’ was among them.

In 1823, Lyte became curate of the church of All Saints in the fishing village of Lower Brixham in Devon. He spent the rest of his life there, promoting Christian education in schools and on ships. But he suffered increasingly from respiratory illnesses and, by the summer of 1847, at the age of 54, he was gravely ill from tuberculosis. He preached his farewell sermon to his congregation on 4 September before travelling to Nice in the hope of checking the progress of the disease in a warmer climate. He wrote ‘Abide With Me’ in his study that afternoon and gave it to his daughter, together with a melody he had composed. Then he travelled south. But even the salubrious Mediterranean air could not cure him. And he died there two weeks later.

At first, the words of ‘Abide With Me’ were paired with various hymn tunes. But in 1861 the editorial board of Hymns Ancient and Modern felt that the words needed something better and asked William Henry Monk to write a new melody. Monk was in great sorrow from the recent loss of his young daughter, and he wrote the tune Eventide. It has become the inseparable companion of Lyte’s words ever since.

The new hymn soon proved popular. Charles Ives arranged it in 1890. So did Mahler, in his ninth and final symphony in 1909. So did Vaughan Williams in 1936. And Nurse Edith Cavell sang it on the evening before her execution in Schaerbeek, Brussels, on 10 October 1915.

As for the FA Cup Final, Sir Alfred Wall, the Secretary of the Football Association, introduced 'Abide With Me' in 1927 to replace Alexander's Ragtime Band, which had been the opening tune for the Cup Final until that time. The initiative was fervently supported by King George V and Queen Mary, who both loved the hymn. So nobody was inclined to disagree. Two years later, the Rugby League followed suit at their Challenge Cup Final. 'Abide With Me' is still sung at both matches every year, an annual moment of faith for a people who are not always religious.

"Abide with us" came at a very surreal moment for the two disciples going to Emmaus. The stranger, Jesus, who they did not recognise" made as if He would travel on when they reached Emmaus, but the two disciples compelled Him to stay the night with them, ***"Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent"***. As they sat down to eat, the stranger took bread and blessed it, and an extraordinary thing occurred. One minute it was a total stranger in front of them, the next it was the Jesus they knew, and the next minute Jesus had vanished from the room, out of their sight. No sooner did their eyes see Him, than their eyes were stopped up again and He was no more.

A strange property of His risen body, gave Him the power to "vanish", to disappear suddenly, and one might think they had seen a spirit or ghost. As we shall see, nothing could be farther from the truth, but certainly His bodily appearance could be changed, as far as we observe, in a moment. This should make us think upon the whole nature of our existence in the world of the living. It is a world of perceptions and these may change according to the purpose of God. We are small but complex machines, making our way through the Cosmos. We undergo a process of aging and ultimately the system which is us, gives out and we are declared dead. But the Bible says that we are more than machines for we have been made in the image of our Creator.

The Bible further reveals to us that we do not function correctly because our software has been corrupted with a virus called sin. We have a bias in our operating system, sin, which will lead to us not seeing the world correctly. Who then is to say what you experience is true or false. Your sensors will fail you and what passes for good will be seen as evil, and what you mean for evil will turn out for good. All experience gained from our sensors, sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste are all capable of being manipulated. We have developed in a world of sin and we have

developed our senses in a world of sin, and who is to say what is the correct perception of anything?

There is another world which we cannot normally see, which functions around us, the world of the spiritual powers in heavenly places. We do not possess the sensors to see this, and we do not see many things outside of the visible spectra, which form one of our limitations. If we saw reality as God sees it, we would see a more profound Universe, but we do not because of the limitations of our sensors.

The person who met the disciples on the Emmaus road was Jesus, apparently changed, and they did not see Him as He appeared to them before the crucifixion. Jesus now, was of a different appearance since the resurrection, *Luk 24:16 they saw him, **but somehow did not recognize him***. GNB. Then their eyes were opened, *Luk 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight*. The same word “opened” is used of the dumb man getting his speech and hearing back again, *Mar 7:34 Then He looked up to heaven and sighed, as He said, "Ephphatha," which means, "**Be opened**."* *Mar 7:35 And his **ears were opened** and **his tongue was untied**, and he began to speak distinctly*. The poor man who was dumb had the senses in place, but they were not working properly.

Did the disciples actually see Jesus in His true light before the crucifixion, as He really is now? I do not think so. He underwent a process at His incarnation and another process at His resurrection. The “kenosis” doctrine is the Greek term for the Son's 'self-emptying'. *Php 2:6 who subsisting in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, Php 2:7 but **emptied** (κενόω = kenoō) Himself taking the form of a slave, having become in the likeness of men Php 2:8 and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even the death of a cross. Php 2:9 Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name*. LITV.

Notice that Philippians 2:7 does not specify what the Son of God “emptied” Himself of. And here we must be careful not to go beyond what Scripture says. Jesus did not empty Himself of His divine attributes, no such attributes are mentioned in the verse, and it is obvious in the gospels that Jesus possessed the power and wisdom of God. Calming the storm is just one display of Jesus’ divine power. In coming to earth, the Son of God did not cease to be God, and He did not become a “lesser god.” Whatever the “emptying” entailed, Jesus remained fully God: “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”

The kenosis was a self-renunciation, a “voiding” of **self**, not an emptying Himself of deity. Nor was it an exchange of deity for humanity. Jesus never ceased to be God

during any part of His earthly ministry. He did set aside His heavenly glory. He also voluntarily refrained from using His divinity to make His way easier. During His earthly ministry, Christ completely submitted Himself to the will of the Father.

Jesus is truly God. He could not stop being God. He “emptied Himself”, is a reference to His position, to His exaltation. What we see is He becomes a servant. This is humiliation, and not only does He become a servant, but He comes obedient unto death and not just death, when it is death on a cross. This is the Jesus at the incarnation and through to His death on the cross.

When Jesus came back from the dead, when His sacrificial work was completed, He returned to His former position, *Php 2:9 **Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name,** Php 2:10 that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow," of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under the earth, Php 2:11 and "every tongue should confess" that Jesus Christ is "Lord," to the glory of God the Father.* LITV.

It is my view, that in accordance with His exaltation, He would appear to mankind differently. The people had killed a man and unleashed God Almighty. We too will be altered in the resurrection, *1Co 15:42 So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 1Co 15:45 So also it has been written, "The" first "man", Adam, "became a living soul;" the last Adam a life-giving Spirit. 1Co 15:46 But not the spiritual first, but the natural; afterward the spiritual. 1Co 15:47 The first man was out of earth, earthy. **The second Man was the Lord out of Heaven.** 1Co 15:48 Such as is the earthy man, such also are the earthy ones. And such as is the heavenly Man, such also are the heavenly ones. 1Co 15:49 **And as we bore the image of the earthy man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.***

The same transformation that Jesus underwent as the “**second Man was the Lord out of Heaven**”, we too undergo, “**we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man**”. And that body will not necessarily be the same body as you have now, *1Co 15:35 Some of you have asked, "How will the dead be raised to life? What kind of bodies will they have?" 1Co 15:36 Don't be foolish. A seed must die before it can sprout from the ground. 1Co 15:37 Wheat seeds and all other seeds look different from the sprouts that come up. 1Co 15:38 This is because God gives everything the kind of body he wants it to have.* CEV.

The body we are raised with will be different and it will be a spiritual body, but not a “spirit” body, 1Co 15:42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and **there is a spiritual body**.

The body Jesus possessed, though like His pre-resurrection body, was in some aspects different. He could suddenly appear and disappear. In the locked upper room, Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of His disciples. His new body had abilities the previous one either did not have or did not demonstrate. He did not have to eat or rest. He also ascended into heaven when his earthly ministry was finished. Consequently there are similarities, as well as differences, between the body that Jesus had while upon the earth and the one in which He was raised.

This says to me that from the beginning, God intended that we should metamorphose into another body and He has given us examples in nature, the butterfly for example. But the example Paul gives us is the grain of wheat, *1Co 15:37 Wheat seeds and all other seeds look different from the sprouts that come up. 1Co 15:38 This is because God gives everything the kind of body he wants it to have.* The wheat did not commit sin in order to be changed, and this process of change, metamorphosis, had occurred in Creation before the sin and the fall of man, *Gen 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

It suggests that we would have metamorphosed anyway, from the natural to the spiritual, from the flesh to the spirit, only the process of change was interrupted by sin, and death formed a partition to the metamorphosis. At that partition, after death and dissolution of the sinful body, man would either be judged guilty for his crimes against God, not being repentant, or else he would be declared innocent because he trusted in the Saviour. Then having taken those that are His, the redeemed, He completes the process of change and the glorification of His people, from the natural to the spiritual.

The Lord Jesus, because He was sinless, did not undergo the same process as we sinners, *Act 2:25 What David said are really the words of Jesus, "I always see the Lord near me, and I will not be afraid with him at my right side. Act 2:26 Because of this, my heart will be glad, my words will be joyful, and I will live in hope. Act 2:27 The Lord won't leave me in the grave. I am his holy one, and he won't let my body decay.* CEV.

We see in Jesus, the metamorphosis that could have occurred to Adam, without sin's intervention. Adam could have been born in the flesh and transformed into a spiritual being (not a spirit being) without the intervention of sin. But Adam saw in his flesh the corruption due to sin, but Christ the last Adam did not, *1Co 15:45 The first man was named Adam, and the Scriptures tell us that he was a living person. But Jesus, who may be called **the last Adam, is a life-giving spirit.*** CEV.

The reason that the disciples did not recognise Jesus was because He had a heavenly body and they were in the flesh.

## 227. Known of Them in Breaking of Bread *Luke 24: 30* - 35

*Luk 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. Luk 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. Luk 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? Luk 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Luk 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. Luk 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

Jesus became more real to the two disciples, more close to them, more vital to them in one action that He did, the “*breaking of bread*”. It was the one thing that He did to make Himself known, the one thing He did before their eyes were opened, *Luk 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.* It was the last supper that He ate before the resurrection but the first supper He ate after the resurrection.

The Lord's Table is the central reason we meet with other **BELEIVERS** though not the only reason for coming together. One reason is so that we use the gifts God has given us to edify one another, that is edify the believer, *1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? **when ye come together**, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. **Let all things be done unto edifying.*** *1Co 14:27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 1Co 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him*



*speak to himself, and to God. 1Co 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 1Co 14:30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 1Co 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 1Co 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 1Co 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*

There are no “minister’s” controlling the meeting, no special day on which the gathering is held, no specified length of the meeting, no “one” person doing all the speaking, no choreographer adding mystery to what is being done, no special building, no regular meeting place, no service, just ordinary believers ALL trying to contribute to edifying one another, building one another up.

The other and the most important reason Christians have for “coming together” is to celebrate the Lord’s death, *1Co 11:17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 1Co 11:18 **For first of all, when ye come together in the church,** I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 1Co 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 1Co 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 1Co 11:21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 1Co 11:22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

Paul is not saying that when they come together in the “church” that he has a building, a steeple house, a Baptist church or any other church building in mind. He does not have a building in mind because the “church” is the Assembly of God’s people, not a building. The Anglicans retained a lot of words in the KJV which support their ecclesiology, and this word church is one of them. I think it is better to render it assembly than church, to avoid the confusion of a “place” with a “people”. In this Assembly of God’s people there is no special person to “take” or administer the elements of bread and wine. There is no special course that you go on to make you acceptable over any other person. This hierarchy of religious competent’s is totally false. Any person can take or distribute the bread and wine.

Well you say, we have to guard the table against unworthy partakers, how is it possible to do this if no one is in charge. But because you have a man in charge doesn’t guarantee that people will not abuse the ordinance. The Lord alone guards the table, *1Co 11:25 After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine in his hands and said, "This is my blood, and with it God makes his new agreement with you. Drink this and remember me." 1Co 11:26 The Lord meant that when you eat this bread and*

*drink from this cup, you tell about his death until he comes. 1Co 11:27 But if you eat the bread and drink the wine in a way that isn't worthy of the Lord, you sin against his body and blood. 1Co 11:28 That's why you must examine the way you eat and drink. 1Co 11:29 If you fail to understand that you are the body of the Lord, you will condemn yourselves by the way you eat and drink. 1Co 11:30 That's why many of you are sick and weak and why a lot of others have died. 1Co 11:31 If we carefully judge ourselves, we won't be punished. 1Co 11:32 But when the Lord judges and punishes us, he does it to keep us from being condemned with the rest of the world. CEV. It is The Lord's Table not man's table.*

When you participate in the Lord's Table, you come face to Face with Jesus and that is the whole point of taking it, you remember the Lord's death until He comes. If you are coming in wilful disobedience to Him, in flagrant sin, you will reap the fruit of your wickedness and He will judge you. The Lord's Table is in some ways, like the Day of Judgement. It prepares our hearts, it keeps Jesus in our mind lest we let Him go, it helps our walk, it gives our worship focus until we actually get to heaven, *1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* And there is no special time or day that we have to take the bread and wine, and we can do it as often as we like with as many believers as we like.

In view of the importance of this ordinance for mankind, for the centrality it holds in respect of the faith, I find it surprising that it is relegated to the tail end of the gathering of the assembly and not at the head. Most assemblies, churches, do this as almost an afterthought, at the end of a meeting, the end of a service of worship. Why is it not held at the start of the gathering rather than the end? Do we not need this at the beginning of a meeting to bring us into focus, to see where we are going, to think of Christ who is the Head of the body, to prepare to meet with Him?

This is what happens when you begin to get complacent with Christ and you see other things taking precedence, and you take it that your salvation is guaranteed and there is little for you to do but go through the motions.

It is little wonder the disciples did not recognise Him despite His teachings. People who go "to church" have knowledge of the teachings of Christ but little knowledge of the person Himself. It is as if all the teaching and instruction Jesus had given during the time before He was killed, became a new "law" to them, just a slightly modified Law of Moses. They certainly did not have the Spirit, and their questioning of the purpose of His ministry on the Emmaus road, certainly showed that they had not understood Him. They were happy to go along with the "new" teaching but the teaching did nothing for them, *Heb 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being*

*left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but **the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.***

When Jesus returns from the grave, no one understands His mission, and they are all looking elsewhere for fulfilment, *Mat 8:25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. Mat 8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, **O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.* It is as if the whole period in which they were under discipleship, before the crucifixion, had failed to change them or there thinking. Because it is written in a form we can read and recover in our Bibles (and although we read of their experiences) it does not mean that they believed or that if you follow those disciples, you will be any other than they were, outward followers of Jesus, not inward followers, true disciples.

Their eyes were opened at the meal they had together and they found out the reason, *“did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way”*. They had a strange warmth towards Jesus, but they did not know why they had it. We have had these feelings in our hearts at times but it does not mean that we knew Him or understood Him. They were burned in their hearts while He *“talked with us by the way”* and their hearts were burned when He *“opened to us the scriptures”*, but still they did not know Him, and it was only when *“their eyes were opened”* that they knew Him.

Were their hearts disturbed with guilt, was it saying that their consciences were burned within them in a bad way, not warmed but burned? “Heart” is the older testament speak for the conscience. Paul speaks of a conscience burned, *1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit manifestly saith that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, 1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy and having **their conscience seared.*** DRB. Were they convicted by Jesus? Fire consumes and I do not see the believers’ ask for their hearts to be set on fire before they can act, but conviction, yes, that is different.

I would sum up the “Emmaus road” journey as another failure of the two disciples, to see who Jesus was, and there were to be some more instances of “the little faiths” with the other disciples before they were converted. It shows that the disciples did not know Jesus. They had knowledge of His teachings but not a personal knowledge of Him. Do you remember back in chapter 177, we said,

The apostle John loves to use **γινώσκω** to describe this deeper, person-to-person knowledge that characterizes God. Jesus chose **γινώσκω** to

describe the intimacy between the Father and the Son, as well as the connection between Himself and His sheep.

That “knowing” Jesus is not yet in the disciples and if they had continued on in the way they were going, He would not have known them, *Mat 7:21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew (γινώσκω) you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Jesus says that He has no intimate knowledge of some people, He never knew them. He never knew them in spite of them working miracles, prophesying, and casting out devils, and these are the very things that the disciples also do, *Luk 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. Luk 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.* Doing these things are not proof that we are saved, any more than they were a proof that the disciples were saved. Just because we do works does not mean heaven is open to us.

The work of God is given to us and it is to believe on Him. *Joh 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God**, that ye **believe on him** whom he hath sent..... Jesus answered and said to them, *This is the work of God, that you believe into Him whom that One sent.* LITV.*

In prison Paul gets a visit from the angel and is released, but his jailor is frightened by this manifestation and cries, *Act 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Act 16:31 And they said, Believe **on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* He doesn't say “believe in Jesus” but believe on, make Jesus the rock on which you build, make Him the foundation and cornerstone of your life. Believing on is different to believing in.

The two disciples go back to Jerusalem, with the news that Jesus had risen, *Luk 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Luk 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. Luk 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

Just what they thought this meant remains to be seen.

## 228. Handle Me *Luke 24: 36 - 40*

*Luk 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. Luk 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. Luk 24:38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Luk 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Luk 24:40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.*

As the disciples get together to share the good news of Jesus resurrection, He suddenly and without warning appears in the centre of them, and despite the greeting of peace, they were terrified and afraid, thinking that they had seen a ghost. To those people, the resurrection of Christ had not entered their Biblical Theology, but they had relied on OT teachings. The OT had brought with it some more recent examples, the raising of Lazarus, the raising of Jairus daughter, and the raising of the widow of Nain's son.

Resurrection was nothing new to the disciples and they should have taken it in their stride, rejoicing over the return of Jesus, but they did not. I suppose that the other resurrections all had the presence of someone who was alive, raising the dead person, and that was Jesus. This was somewhat different, as Jesus lay down His life and resurrected Himself, *Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. Joh 10:18 **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** This commandment have I received of my Father.*

Perhaps this made it rather scary, because no one uttered any words, or touched the body, and no one else was around when it was done, and this body which Jesus took, certainly seemed to disobey the observed conventions of human nature. It could transform, or at least, seem to the observers to transform, as at Emmaus. It could disappear at will, and materialise miles away, at it had done here in Jerusalem, *Joh 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, **when the doors were shut** where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.* The body of Jesus could pass through the things of this world as if they were nothing, so it was quite natural for them to be scared. You too would be scared if

someone appeared, materialised, in your locked house, and you would certainly think it was a ghost.

This resurrection was not obeying the rules of resurrection that they had seen before. This was no ordinary body that Jesus came in. He showed them his hands and His feet because they doubted His face. The body that Jesus possessed, though like His pre-resurrection body, was in some aspects quite different. He could suddenly appear and disappear. In the locked upper room, Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of His disciples. His new body had abilities the previous one either did not have or did not demonstrate. He did not apparently have to eat or rest. He also ascended into heaven when his earthly ministry was finished. Consequently there are similarities, as well as differences, between the body that Jesus had while upon the earth and the one in which he was raised.

Jesus is at pains to show that He is physically resurrected and that He has a corporeal body, a physical body, as opposed to a spirit form. He encourages His followers to touch Him and the feet and hands which bore the imprint of the crucifixion are still showing the marks. I was thinking, "Do we also carry the marks of this world on our bodies?" Jesus did, so why not us? And what of the Scripture that says, *Mat 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. Mat 18:9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: **it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*** Doesn't that say we carry the marks gained in life into the next life?

St. Augustine, speculated that we shall see in the bodies of martyrs, the traces of the wounds they bore for Christ's name, "because it will not be a deformity, but a dignity in them; and a certain kind of beauty will shine in them."

I have undergone physical changes in my life on earth, good and bad. They are the experiences and hurts and wounds, which men or I myself inflicted. It is what makes me unique and different from others, and if you take that away from me, I cease to be me. "Paint me warts and all", said Cromwell, and he saw the vanity of disguising yourself, so does God do the same?

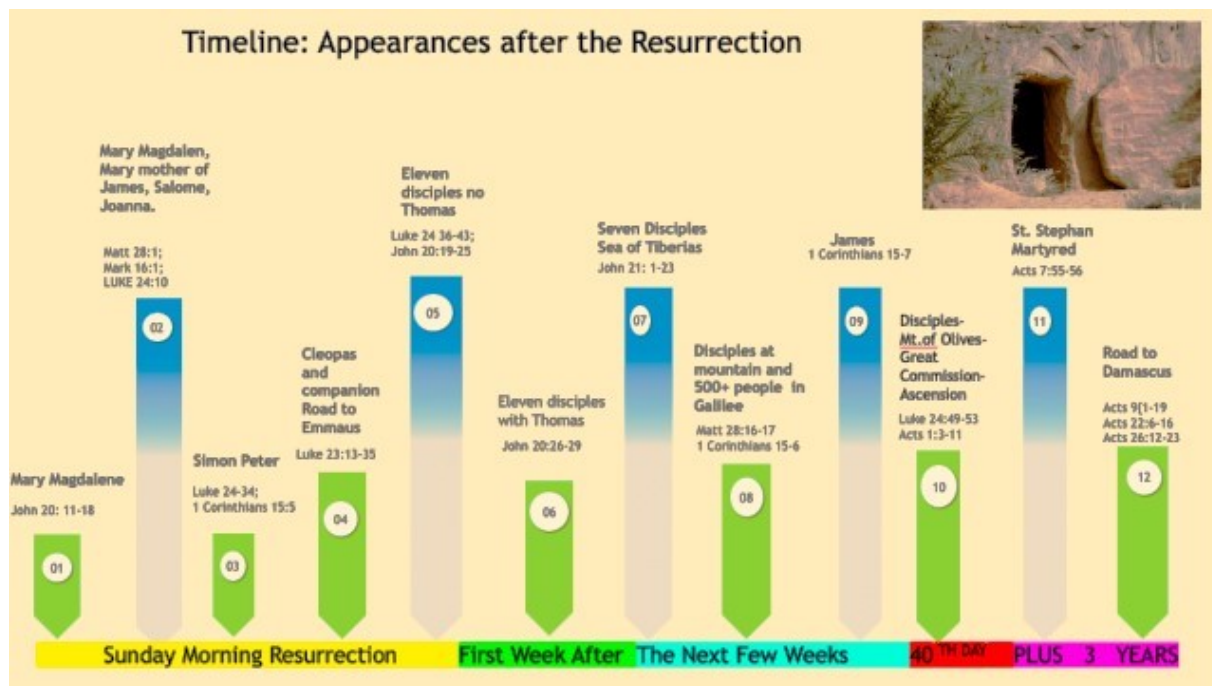
When in 1653, Cromwell sat for his portrait by Dutch artist Peter Lely, it was common for portraits to flatter the subject by softening or removing any blemishes (like early photo shopping). Lely's painting style was, as was usual at the time, intended to flatter the sitter. Royalty in particular expected portraits to show them in the best possible light.

But for Cromwell, there was no better way to distance himself from the vanity and self-indulgence of the monarchy than by having his likeness as accurate as possible. Cromwell did have a preference for being portrayed as a gentleman of military bearing, as a 'puritan Roundhead' rather than a 'dashing Cavalier'.

When Lely (who had also been the portrait painter to King Charles I), was brought before Cromwell, therefore, he was supposedly told by Cromwell: *"I desire you would use all your skill to paint your picture truly like me... but remark all these roughness, pimples, warts and everything as you see me. Otherwise, I will never pay a farthing for it."* Lely did just as he was told.

We will be fit for glory and I do not think that one person will be more complete than another person, but the things which made us what we are, we carry as reminders of Christ's work for us. I do not think that this will in any way inhibit us functioning as the Lord wills.

To understand where we are, in the timeline of the events surrounding the Gospel, I have reproduced this chart from the "A matter of Perspective" website.



It gives a picture of what Jesus did after He rose again. Its worth looking at John's Gospel to fill in more of the story, *Joh 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being*

*the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. Joh 20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Joh 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Joh 20:22 And when he had said this, **he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Joh 20:23 Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.***

This gives us a bit more information to add to Luke's narrative.

1. He breathes on them the Holy Spirit. This shows that the Spirit proceeds from Christ. It does not say this was the conversion of the disciples, though I think that it probably was in the light of what Jesus tells them next. Thomas was not with them.
2. He gives them the power to remit sins. This is likely to be the later Apostolic teaching and conformity to the Apostles doctrine.

Thomas was not there at the time, *Joh 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. Joh 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Joh 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Joh 20:27 **Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.** Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Dear Thomas would only believe if he could feel the wounds of Jesus', but Jesus said, "*because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*". You and I have not seen, but we have believed and we are blessed, but not more blessed.

There is one other thing that Thomas says when he recognises Jesus, he says, "**My Lord and my God**". Why should the response to touching His wounds elicit this response? Upon seeing Jesus in the flesh with his own eyes (and possibly touching the wounds), "*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*". Thomas' moment of uncertainty earned



him the nickname “Doubting Thomas,” which evolved into a term for anyone who needs proof before they believe something. But it still doesn’t answer the question.

Thomas could have said to Jesus, “I now believe”, or “praise the Lord” or any other phrase that showed his pleasure that Jesus was raised again, but he doesn’t, he says, “**My Lord and my God**”. In that moment he is given a revelation of truth. It is very much like Peter seeing the Messiah for who he was, *Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, **but my Father which is in heaven.***

This did not mean that Peter was anyone special to have received this knowledge from the Almighty, that Peter was saved, or that he was gifted or that he was above other men. It just meant that he had a revelation from God, a prophesy if you will, of the true nature of Jesus, and from what transpires in his life, in the short term, I am not sure that he understood it. I wonder if Peter had this event in his mind when he said, *1Pe 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 1Pe 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1Pe 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

I think this is why Thomas said what he did, he prophesied, and in this proclamation, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus responded with one of the most powerful and prophetic statements about faith in all of scripture, “*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*”. Jesus had enabled Thomas to make this statement, so that He could respond to it.

He does not say, hold on Thomas, you’re getting carried away with your praise, don’t say that I am God, don’t cast any doubt upon my person that will have future generations confused about My person. No, He accepts what Thomas has said and that is an end to the matter. **He IS God.** And if we were to look through the things that He did, we would acknowledge that. He is the Word of God, the personification of the thoughts of God, *Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. Joh 1:3 **All things were made by him;** and without him was not any thing made that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.....Joh 1:14 **And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,** (and*

*we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

It was not said so that we would have another doctrine in our theology, it was more than that. It was given to bring us into fellowship with the disciples, and make us all one in Christ, it was a part of the dynamic by which we are brought into Christ, *1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, **and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;** 1Jn 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 1Jn 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, **that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.** 1Jn 1:4 And these things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full.***

## **229. Understanding Luke 24: 41 - 47**

*Luk 24:41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? Luk 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. Luk 24:43 And he took it, and did eat before them. Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Luk 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, Luk 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: Luk 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*

The disciples “believed” not for joy, or as another version puts it, *Luk 24:41 They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder; so he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"* GNB. Jesus had risen but there were lingering doubts, and it wasn’t just Thomas, they all wondered about Jesus, but Jesus doesn’t test them, He shows them He has body by taking food and eating it. The idea that a ghost or spirit could ingest food into a non-corporeal body was not true, and was at once put to bed by this act of eating.

The word “spirit” can have a spectrum of meanings, from disembodied phantasms, ghosts, demons, to those creatures called angels. It caused me to consider, however, whether angels were spirits or just another form of a creature with a

“body”. We take angels to be spirits from the verse in Hebrews, *Heb 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* This is the quotation from the Psalms, *Psa 104:1 Bless, O my soul, Jehovah! Jehovah, my God, Thou hast been very great, Honour and majesty Thou hast put on. Psa 104:2 Covering himself with light as a garment, Stretching out the heavens as a curtain, Psa 104:3 Who is laying the beam of His upper chambers in the waters, Who is making thick clouds His chariot, Who is walking on wings of wind, Psa 104:4 Making His messengers—the winds, His ministers—the flaming fire.* YLT.

I think that the angels, messengers are more like the wind, as his ministers are like the fire, and this continues the comparison with natural phenomenon in the Psalm. The Hebrew word for wind is the same as spirit, just the same as the Greek word for wind is the same as spirit, *Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit (πνεῦμα), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit (πνεῦμα) is spirit (πνεῦμα). Joh 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Joh 3:8 The wind (πνεῦμα) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (πνεῦμα).* It is a very clever play on the word πνεῦμα.

So if the angels are not spirits, this makes sense of the passage in Acts, *Act 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. Act 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.* Angels are separate from spirits.

In Abrahams time, three angels appear to him and he welcomes them with a meal, we know they were angels from the text, *Gen 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; Gen 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, ..... Gen 18:22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. Gen 19:1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; The men were angels.*

The angels consume the meal, *Gen 18:7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to*

*dress it. Gen 18:8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, **and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.*** Angels have a form like we do in the resurrection, they have bodies and they can eat, also as Jesus did.

It s interesting that Rhoda said that Peter was standing at the door, the rest of the household said it was "his angel", *Act 12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. Act 12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. **Then said they, It is his angel.*** Angels are a lot like us, but not like spirits.

For a spirit to manifest itself in this material world, it must normally take hold of a body by possession, demon possession. The angel does not possess men but has his own presence, and we never hear of angels possessing people in order to show themselves. It may be that God took away the ability of fallen angels to show themselves after they fell into sin, and they became just "spirits" and the only way to show themselves was by taking over another's body. I don't recall any verses in the Bible which show demons eating, because they are spirits, but there are cases of angels eating, and the manna from heaven is called angel food, *Psa 78:24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Psa 78:25 **Man did eat angels' food:** he sent them meat to the full.*

Jesus was not a spirit, *Luk 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; **for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*** Or as another version puts it, *Luk 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. **Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have.***" CEV. The disciples feared He was a spirit, just as they had before when walking on the water, *Mat 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. Mat 14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.* But He was not a spirit.

He show plainly that His body is real, as real as yours or mine, by ingesting fish and honeycomb, *Luk 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. Luk 24:43 And he took it, and did eat before them.* Ghosts don't eat, humans do, what more proof do you want?

The events that had happened over the past recent days were a confirmation of what Jesus had taught them, *Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were **written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in***

***the psalms, concerning me.*** He is what makes sense of the Bible, He is the glue that binds the Scripture together, He is what gives meaning to the sacred word, Jesus and only Jesus.

The Bible is a book of stories with a golden thread running through it. Jesus is the thread that binds the Bible into a single book that has meaning, instead of a number of disjointed stories of men's lives. It is as if there is another story overlaid upon the originals. A transparent film lies over the great heroes of the faith and we see in their lives the shadowy form of Christ moving. In the books of Moses, we see the transparent film again laid over the whole, informing us of another, deeper meaning in the person of the Messiah.



The Tabernacle is seen afresh with the Messiah overlaid upon the objects, objects like the Ark of the Covenant which is clearly a type of Christ. The reality was not the object that man made, the Ark, but He Himself who printed His Image on it. The same is true for Moses, the man the Jews revered. He wasn't to be the supreme advocate for the Law of God, he was only an interim prophet who held office until Christ was manifest. Moses was a type of Christ but Christ was the Law, and every one of the 613 laws that made up "The Law", say something about Christ and your behaviour to God and

man

Jesus does not continue to go on and do more, He has completed His work, "*that all things must be fulfilled*", Heb 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; Heb 10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.* This is what is meant by the finished word of Christ, it is finished. Finished that is as far as Jesus is concerned, but ongoing for us, as we put on that finished work, like the priest put on the holy garments, Exo 29:21 *And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and **he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.***

We can admire the finished work from a distance, not even putting a thread of it on, we can look at the work of Christ and agree that it was a wonderful and complete sacrifice without seeing that we have a duty to wear the fruit of His labours and not just approve of them. Many people who accept Christ's person, do not bother with the other part, they say good, He has done it, but now they must take up the mantle of His finished work. And when I look at Christians, I look in vain for the change. I see the same person year after year, no change occurring, and it worries me but it does not seem to worry them. Its not they who change but their God who has to change, and that is what they think of Christ.

We must change and be aware of the change in our lives and that it in the right direction, *Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 **And be renewed in the spirit of your mind**; Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* We must see Christ in our mirror and become like Him, *2Co 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

But this can only be done when we have understanding and that is given by Christ alone. I have had a stab at translating this verse because the KJV does not give a thorough meaning, *Luk 24:45 **"Then He opened wide their minds that they could put together the Scriptures"***. The Scripture is saying that the disciples had some understanding of what Jesus was doing, but that it was not complete, not as we say today, "joined up thinking". Their minds were closed to much of what He had said, *Joh 10:6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.* They did not "know", γινώσκω, fully what He said, and many times it says of them that "they understood not".

This required a Divine change in their thinking, the needed their minds expanded, the needed their minds opened wide so that they could put the scriptures all together, or as we say, their horizons broadened. They had a narrow view of the sacred writings and this needed correction, and Jesus gave them the ability to see beyond their viewpoint. The Scriptures pointed to one central event which they would now understand, the resurrection of Christ, three days after He died, and this important fact was to be the distinctive of the Gospel, the very nature of Him, which they would carry to the world.

*Luk 24:46 and said to them, "This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, Luk 24:47 and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.* GNB. It was a

Gospel, the good news of forgiveness to all mankind through His atoning death. But it was not a blanket forgiveness and there was something we had to do before we could ever enter in to that forgiveness.

We had to repent, to turn from our sin. Not just say “I repent” for words come cheap, but to be repentant in the depths of our soul, continuing to be sorry for our sin, *2Co 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 2Co 7:10 **For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

And that is the sum and substance of the Gospel.

### 230. The Beginning *Luke 24: 48 - 53*

*Luk 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things. Luk 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. Luk 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. Luk 24:51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luk 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: Luk 24:53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen*

Or as Matthew says of the event, *Mat 28:18 Jesus came to them and said: I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Mat 28:19 Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Mat 28:20 and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.*

These men, this small band of disciples, now are trusted by Jesus to go out to the world and spread the message of the Gospel. Jesus confidently leaves the task ahead to the ordinary man with extraordinary powers, to use the principal method which is the preaching of the word, *1Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, **it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.** 1Co 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 1Co 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 1Co 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

It went well initially because they were all unified in their aim, *Act 4:32 Now the whole group of those who believed was **one in heart and mind**. No one would say anything he owned was his own, but they had everything in common.* TLV. And it would be nice to say that they continued like that, but they did not. To see how far apart everyone has come, we look to movements that aim to unite Christians, some 2000 years on. Most authorities date the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement to the Edinburgh (Scotland) World Missionary Conference of 1910. The Conference was a gathering of Protestants and Anglicans, and was concerned with collaboration in Christian Missions. No doubt they had their conscience pricked by how far they have lost that unity during the intervening years.

Ecumenism is the concept and principle that Christians who belong to different Christian denominations should work together to develop closer relationships among their churches and promote Christian unity. The adjective ecumenical is thus applied to any non-denominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation and union among Christian denominations and churches. So it's a non-denominational attempting to overthrow denominationalism which seems on the face of it alright.

The word derives from οἰκουμένη = oikoumenē, the inhabited world, often used for the Roman Empire. It was used by Jesus, *Mat 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world (οἰκουμένη) for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* No, it did not require an ecumenical movement, that already in a manner of speaking existed by Jesus' disciples the preaching of the Gospel, it did not need another organisation to be set up by man.

The fact that all Christians belonging to mainstream Christian denominations, profess faith in Jesus, believe that the Bible is inspired by God, receive baptism according to the Trinitarian formula is seen as being a basis for ecumenism and its goal of Christian unity. Ecumenists cite John 17:20-23 as the biblical grounds of striving for church unity, in which Jesus prays "may all be one" in order "that the world may know" and believe the Gospel message.

No, not just believe the Gospel message, but believe in Christ, "*as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that **they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*", *Joh 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; Joh 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. Joh 17:22 **And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:***



The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches has undertaken to bring certain people together under a Statement of Faith, and says that “These statements represent the convictions of believers in this church. We hold them unreservedly and wholeheartedly, and **disavow all teaching to the contrary as being contrary to the plain understanding of the Holy Bible**”.

In a codicil to its statement of faith it says,

Because of the confusion existing among those who call themselves Christians and between churches, this church (FIEC?) wants to make its position transparent on the following issues:

**The Ecumenical Movement:** The truths in this statement of faith, held with integrity, necessarily exclude this fellowship from involvement with the ecumenical movement which denies the exclusive nature of the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Roman Catholicism:** It will be apparent (*sic!*) to those reading it, that this statement of faith denies the claims of the Roman Catholic Pope and Church. The doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church are diametrically opposed to the salvation of sinners and the belief and practices set out in the scriptures.

**The Charismatic movement:** Christians believe differently about the Charismatic gifts, like ‘speaking in tongues’. It is the decision of this fellowship that to avoid dissension and division we are not what may be called a “Charismatic” Church. The so-called gifts as they are expressed in our day **are not to be used in the fellowship**, neither are they to be promoted among us, either explicitly or privately.

**Inter-Church fellowship:** Inter-Church fellowship will be sought with other individual Churches **which unreservedly accept the doctrinal statement of this Constitution**, as reflecting accurately their own position which they also hold sincerely and without reservation.

**Our conduct as individuals and as a Church:** This Church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its supreme Head, and its individual members as part of the one body. We believe in His abiding presence and undertake to order our lives and the affairs of this church according to our understanding of the Word of God, **under the guidance of the Holy Spirit**.

That is just how to create a barrier to fellowship! It is exclusive brethren, not the brethren trying to iron out the differences in belief at a local level. It is not just the one-man ministry of the local church coming together with the other one-man ministries, taking charge of the matter and excluding everyone else, so that they can make some religious sound bites, which will stop the process of unification dead in its track by their pronouncements.

The WHOLE Bible is to be believed and therein lies the problem of Ecumenism. Agreeing a few truths and then closing the door to others who don't hold these "truths" is exclusivism and taken to its logical end breeds disunity. It puts up the very barriers which it tries to breakdown. We would do well to heed Martin Luther, who said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great pope, Self". A brother tried to involve us in his form of unity, back in 1991. He thought we should come together in fellowship, but not discuss the issues which divide us. In other words there were to be some scriptural "no go" areas. This is part of the letter that I wrote back to him,

I believe that we honour Christ when we are prepared to come seek the truth on His terms and confront error, not when we make our own terms of reference. I understand that the "Ecumenical Movement is concerned with the manifestation of the essential unity of the church, with the solidarity and cooperation of the churches, with their common witness and their common action in the world", I quote from the Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission. It continues, "even though there remain important differences in matters of faith and order between the different confessions, churches and Christians can enter into fraternal relations with each other..." Surely, unless I am mistaken, this is what you are proposing? We are rejecting one Ecumenical Movement in favour of setting up another Ecumenical Movement which is basically an evangelical Ecumenical Movement. Like the Ecumenical Movement we can have limited relationships while retaining our own distinctive beliefs and essentially failing to sort out the differences.

However, if we take the biblical view of unity, meeting to solve differences (Acts 15 is a good example of this) and acting as ministers "to give instruction in sound doctrine to confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1 v 9) we might certainly achieve something. In fact I would welcome any church group to attend where the terms of reference were "the scripture as the rule of faith and practice".

I would like to see more debate among Christians, to the end that we could resolve our differences and present a united front to the world at large and work for the defeat of our common enemy the principalities and powers of darkness. I hope that we can work together, to improve our testimony to this estate where we live and that we might encourage one another to this end. Please accept these thoughts for the 'melting pot' as constructive input into your initiative.

The meetings did not take off.

We do not seem to talk much about the Spirit of God when discussing why the church has deviated from the original plan, *Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. The FIEC used a phrase which I cited earlier, **“under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”**. I find it simply amazing that they would claim to be “guided” in matters of ecumenism, **“under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”**, but the ministers from this organisation offer no concrete idea of what their calling is **“under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”**. What led them to go into their “denominations” and where the Scripture, which they hold up as being their only light, **“under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”**, have any denominations at all? They contradict themselves. For example, where does the Bible show that Christians joined a Baptist church, or an Evangelical church or any other named church in the mainstream of churches? This is leading us towards the reason for ecumenism.

It seems to me that man gets too big for his boots, and he is building his church not Jesus' church. *“Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world”*. That is a charge to go out and make disciples, not make mega churches, not make denominations, not gathering of people together into large groups, where there is nothing for them to do except listen to the most knowledgeable people or the people that seem to know more than them. It does not say when you have got some believers who are more keen on what you say, you make them an occupation and pay them to do your study for you. And where do these men come from who give themselves title that you will not find in Scripture, and attempt to lead you?

If we are led by the Spirit in our studies we will not be studying the same scripture as, say a church in Africa. The Spirit leading the churches will have different problem and different directions for them to go in. Check the differences between the 7 churches which live in such a small geographic area, on the “Walking with Jesus” blog site, which has created a good comparison chart. If the different challenges that the 7 churches face, over such a small geographic area, why are we attempting to get churches together in such circumstances, to form large conglomerations of different problems? They aren't even helping themselves, let alone everyone else.

The ecumenical churches cannot solve their own problems so why do we think a Global church will do any better. Who told man to get the churches together? Wasn't it the believers who had all things in common, not the “churches”. The believers in a locality, striving to improve themselves, not a load of disparate people

who don't bother to solve their personal problems and think that they have a right to get everyone else together to solve their problems while neglecting their own? Men representing the "church", trying to get "unity", for whom? What madness. The ecumenical movement is a crazy man's dream, it is a distraction from our task of being witnesses of Jesus. It is not Jesus' solution.

It is Christ's Church, and according to Revelation, He has at least 7 of them, and they obey Him, not men, and Christ unites them in one, not men or a man's dream of Ecumenism. Men who promote themselves to offices which Jesus did not give the church claim to be guiding you to the truth, their truth not God's truth. Ecumenism is the overthrowing of Christ in favour of man' but it is too big and too much for a mortal man.

If we see any attempt to come together it is with regard to charitable enterprises, giving to a common need, Giving to a common need, led by the Spirit, not by men, *Act 11:27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. Act 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world (οἰκουμένη): which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Act 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Act 11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* There is true ecumenism in giving but not in getting churches under a common flag of man.

Jesus doesn't need man's hand to keep His church from falling over, and like an earlier man, Uzzah, he will be smitten of God for trying, how ever well meaning the gesture, *2Sa 6:2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. 2Sa 6:3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart..... 2Sa 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. 2Sa 6:7 **And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.***

The Ark represented Christ, the Body of Christ, in earthly form as we saw before, and was on its journey to the Tabernacle of David, which incidentally has been raised again in this age, *Act 15:16 After this I will return, and will **build again the tabernacle of David**, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: Act 15:17 **That the residue of men might seek after the Lord**, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth*

*all these things. That Body of Christ, we find is the church, Col 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for **his body's sake, which is the church**:*

I do not fancy changing one thing about the Church or propping it up because I think it will fall over. It will not. However shaky it seems on its journey to heaven, rest assured it will get there safely, as I pray you the readers and listeners will. You are all unique, blocks carved by Him, 1Pe 2:5 *And now **you are living stones** that are being used to build a spiritual house. You are also a group of holy priests, and with the help of Jesus Christ you will offer sacrifices that please God. 1Pe 2:6 It is just as God says in the Scriptures, "Look! I am placing in Zion a choice and precious cornerstone. No one who has faith in that one will be disappointed."* CEV.

You are living stones, not living clones, who have “made by Christ” stamped on you, not the name of your denomination stamped on you. You are Christ’s and that is the end of the matter.

The Seven Churches of Asia :: Revelation 2-3 :: Comparison Chart

| Jesus                                       | Ephesus                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Smyrna                                                                                                                                                       | Pergamos                                                                                                                                                   | Thyatira                                                                                                                                          | Sardis                                                                                                                                               | Philadelphia                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Laodiceans                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Encouragement</i>                        | God holds those who give their lives to Him in His hands and is present with us. He desires intimate fellowship with us.                                                                                     | Your God is the One, True God of all Creation, who is Jesus, who rose from the dead and is alive.                                                            | The power and authority of God's Word is with those who are with Him.                                                                                      | God is a God of justice, wrath and judgment. He searches the minds and hearts and judges according to each one's works.                           | God wants to provide you with a Spirit led and empowered life.                                                                                       | Your faith is in the One, true, all-powerful, eternal and holy God of all authority. You are unstoppable in His will.                                                                                             | These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.                                                                     |
| <i>Indictment</i>                           | Close fellowship with God has been lost. The intimacy in the relationship is gone.                                                                                                                           | NONE                                                                                                                                                         | God's Word brings judgment on those who are against it.                                                                                                    | *Same as above. False prophetess will be throne on sickbed and her children killed.                                                               | I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.                                                                        | NONE                                                                                                                                                                                                              | You do not know Me, are unfaithful, untrue and stand opposed to your Creator.                                                                                        |
| <i>Commendation/ Encouragement/ Promise</i> | Works, labor, perseverance, patience. You cannot stand those that are evil. Found false apostles liars. Labored for my Name and not become weary. You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans (which I also hate). | Works, tribulation, poverty. I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews but are a synagogue of Satan. You are physically poor but spiritually rich. | Works. You hold fast to my Name and did not deny My faith, even in the face of martyrdom. I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. | Works. love, service, faith, perseverance. Your works now are more than the first.                                                                | You have a few names who have not defiled their garments.<br><br>They will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.                               | I know your works. You have a little strength. have kept My Word, and not denied My Name. You will be vindicated and rule with Me. Since you've kept My command to persevere, I will keep you from the Grt. Trib. | NONE<br>Promise: I am knocking. I will come in to him who hears My voice and opens the door.<br>Enc: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous and repent. |
| <i>Rebuke</i>                               | You've left your first love.                                                                                                                                                                                 | NONE                                                                                                                                                         | You have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam (idolatry and sexual immorality). Nicolaitans.                                                              | You allow Jezebel (false prophetess) to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and idolatry. She did not repent- no longer may. | Your faith is not complete before God.                                                                                                               | NONE                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.                            |
| <i>Admonition</i>                           | Remember from where you've fallen; repent, and do the first works.                                                                                                                                           | Do not fear what you will suffer. Some will be imprisoned to be tested and have tribulation. Be faithful to death and I will give you life.                  | Repent                                                                                                                                                     | Repent or I will judge you according to your works.<br>To the faithful; hold fast what you have until I come.                                     | Be watchful and strengthen what little remains. Remember what you have received and heard, hold fast and repent.                                     | My return is imminent. Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.                                                                                                                                  | Repent and get true faith, justification by faith, so that your sin is removed and you may see the truth.                                                            |
| <i>Ultimatum</i>                            | Repent or your church will be removed from its place.                                                                                                                                                        | NONE                                                                                                                                                         | Repent or I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.                                                                                            | Tribulation, unless you repent of your deeds                                                                                                      | If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief.                                                                                              | NONE                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Be zealous and repent , or be vomited out of My mouth.                                                                                                               |
| <i>To those who overcome</i>                | I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.                                                                                                                      | You shall not be hurt by the second death.                                                                                                                   | I will give some of the hidden manna to eat and a white stone with a new name written on it which no one knows but him who receives it.                    | I will give ruling power over the nations, as I also have received from My Father. And I will give him the Morning Star.                          | He will be clothed in white garments. I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but will confess his name before My Father and His angels. | You will be a pillar in the temple of My God. You will go out no more. I will write on you the name of God, the City of God and My New Name.                                                                      | I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.                                                              |

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

